

2018 AHURI International Study Tour Report: Canada



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Michael is a research and policy development specialist with experience in a wide range of areas, including housing and homelessness, public health, urban policy and community services planning.

After joining AHURI in 2014, he was appointed Executive Director in 2017 and is now responsible for setting the strategic direction of the Institute and leading the development of a contemporary and policy-relevant evidence base on housing, homelessness and urban issues.

Michael has extensive expertise in building research programs and policy agendas with not-for-profit, government and academic organisations. Michael has authored numerous peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, research monographs, reports and policy framework documents.

He currently serves on a variety of expert advisory panels, including the Australian Government's Smart Cities Reference Group, the Housing Supply Expert Panel, the Queensland Housing and Homelessness Research Alliance, the Australian Government's Homelessness Action Plan Reference Group, The Urban Futures and Sustainable Living Expert Research Advisory Group, and the Homes for Homes Advisory Group.

He is also a past president of the Australasian Society for Behavioural Health and Medicine, and for many years has served on various Human Research Ethics Committees as a representative of the research community.

Michael is an in-demand facilitator and conference speaker, and an experienced media spokesperson.

Ms Louise Gilding

Executive Director, Housing ACT, Community Services Directorate, Australian Capital Territory Government

Louise is a strong believer in serving the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) community and has done so for the last 20 years. She currently leads the delivery of public housing and homelessness services in the ACT, which includes responsibility for Total Facilities Management (TFM) contracts, strategic policy and asset management, housing and homelessness policy, capital works and public housing renewal, program design and service delivery, and tenancy management.

Convinced that street homelessness can be ended in Canberra, Louise and her team are leading an extensive community discussion to develop a new ACT Housing Strategy, which will aim to reduce homelessness, strengthen social housing assistance, increase affordable rental options and improve pathways to affordable home ownership.

Louise brings extensive public policy experience to her role. She has built numerous multi-disciplinary teams to solve complex problems. Bringing together economic, legal and policy frameworks, Louise has worked on a diverse range of policy issues, including:

- crafting strategic economic changes through the ACT Business Development Strategy

- designing a trading scheme for gaming machines
- law reform in health and safety.

Louise is highly skilled at bringing together different academic thinking styles to clearly identify problems and deliver pragmatic solutions that result in positive community outcomes.

Louise has an Executive Master of Public Administration and has studied law, economics, public policy, community counselling and politics.

Mr Jamie Chalker, APM

Chief Executive Officer, Northern Territory Government Department of Local Government, Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

Jamie was appointed CEO of DHCD in December 2016, following a policing career in the Northern Territory (NT) that commenced in 1994. He spent more than half of his policing career based outside of Darwin, performing general duties and policing in remote Aboriginal communities, as well as undertaking criminal investigation and senior executive management roles.

Career highlights include coordinating the evacuation—and subsequent repatriation six weeks later—of 1,500 people from Kalkaringi and Daguragu due to the 2011 Victoria River floods. In 1999 he was awarded a Royal Humane Society Bronze Medal for Bravery for entering flood waters and rescuing a man who had been swept down river in Wattie Creek near Daguragu. He also holds the Australian Police Medal (APM) and has earned recognition for his successes working on homicide, drug and organised crime investigations.

Jamie was Event Controller for the 2011 visit to Darwin by the President of the United States and commanded the Emergency Operations Centre to ensure the effective deployment of the largest ever security contingent by the NT Police. In his time as Assistant Commissioner—Regional Operations, he championed the rollout of SupportLink; designed and implemented the Community Safety Action Plans; introduced Aboriginal liaison officers into remote communities; and realised significant crime reductions across the regional and remote portfolio.

Following a year as the Acting Deputy Commissioner of the NT Police, and having acted as the Commissioner of Police, Fire and Emergency Services, Jamie was appointed CEO of DHCD. Under Jamie's charter, DHCD leads the delivery of the government's priorities in the areas of housing and community development. The department is integral in the development of towns, regions and remote areas, with responsibility for urban and remote public housing, local government, Aboriginal interpreting services, homeland and outstation services, remote land tenure and Indigenous essential services. It is the main provider of social housing in the NT and responsible for over 12,000 dwellings and 9,000 tenancies.

Ms Mychelle Curran

Executive Director Strategy, NSW Land and Housing Corporation, New South Wales Government Department of Family and Community Services (FACS)

Since the 1990s, Mychelle has worked at management and senior executive level in complex human services agencies that deliver a diverse range of functions and services, predominantly to highly disadvantaged and often socially excluded individuals, families and communities.

As Director Urban Strategy and Asset Investment for Housing SA, Mychelle was responsible for leading the acquisition and delivery of new construction and

refurbishment programs totalling around \$500 million per annum, for new social housing and remote Indigenous housing. Mychelle also spent three and a half years as Deputy Chief Executive Housing NT, where she implemented a number of strategic housing programs and priorities on behalf of government, including programs responding to antisocial behaviour in public housing and new affordable housing initiatives.

Mychelle relocated to NSW in 2014, where she led the delivery of high-quality housing, and child protection and disability services across the Sydney district. The following year, Mychelle moved to a state-wide program management role, responsible for homelessness and targeted early intervention programs with annual budgets in excess of \$400 million, as well as development and implementation of a range of new service improvement initiatives under the state government's Future Directions for Social Housing in NSW strategy.

In late 2017, Mychelle moved to her current role, where she has worked with central agencies and FACS central office to lead and deliver a comprehensive review of the NSW Land and Housing Corporation's (LAHC's) property portfolio. Mychelle is also leading development of Human Services Outcomes planning at major urban renewal sites through LAHC's Communities Plus program.

Mychelle completed postgraduate studies in social science, specialising in Housing Management and Policy. In 2012 she participated in the ANZSOG Executive Fellows Program.

Mr Greg Cash

Deputy Director General Housing, Government of Western Australia Department of Communities

Greg has more than 20 years' experience in housing, having worked broadly across all areas of the WA Housing Authority. Greg has undertaken a number of key managerial and leadership positions, with responsibility for leading and driving the Housing Authority's public and affordable housing objectives. He took a leading role in shaping the Housing Authority's land and built form investment strategy, and within the Strategy and Policy and Commercial Operations divisions.

In his current role, Greg is responsible for the delivery and management of specialised rental services across the state's public housing, Aboriginal remote and town-based housing, and Government Regional Officer Housing programs. Key to the provision of these programs is the effective and efficient leadership and management of a geographically diverse workforce, and quality contract and relationship management of maintenance and other service providers.

Within the Aboriginal remote and town-based housing program, Greg has overseen Western Australia's award-winning delivery of new homes, refurbishments and a new approach to tenancy management in remote Indigenous communities through the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing/National Partnership Agreement on Remote Housing.

Greg has tertiary qualifications in Politics and International Studies, and Public Policy and Management. He has brought a strong focus on leadership, performance management, governance and accountability to the Service Delivery portfolio.

Mr Nick Foa

Deputy Secretary Housing and Infrastructure, Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

Following senior roles in local government—as CEO of Brimbank City Council and Director at Maribyrnong and Maroondah councils—Nick entered state government as Executive Director, Local Government Victoria.

Nick joined DHHS in December 2014 as Deputy Secretary, Sport and Recreation Victoria. In 2015 he was seconded to the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources to head the Visitor Economy Review, before leading Tourism Victoria through their transition to Visit Victoria.

Nick's current portfolio encompasses local and state sporting infrastructure, major health service capital works, delivering social housing, including significant statutory accountabilities as the Director of Housing, and building strategic international engagement partnerships.

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Acronyms and abbreviations used in this report

AHMA	Aboriginal Housing Management Association
AHURI	Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute
BCNPHA	BC Non-Profit Housing Association
CAEH	Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness
CHFBC	Co-operative Housing Federation of BC
CHRA	Canadian Housing and Renewal Association
CMHC	Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
HPS	Homelessness Partnering Strategy
MAP	Managed alcohol program
NHI	National Housing Initiative
TCH	Toronto Community Housing

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The 2018 AHURI International Study Tour was designed to provide senior Australian housing officials with an in-depth understanding of leading international housing reform initiatives and effective program and service innovations.

The Study Tour focussed on Canada, which, given the similarities between Canada and Australia in terms of populations, demographics, geographic challenges and housing issues, was an ideal subject for investigation. Canada's similar federated government structures, Indigenous housing challenges, and geographic distribution of the population provide interesting parallels and lessons for Australian housing and homelessness policy development. The recent implementation of a national housing strategy provides a useful backdrop to the understanding of Canada's housing policy direction and service provision.

The Study Tour provided an immersive opportunity to learn from the policy reforms and practice innovations of a similar nation. During the tour, which ran from 8–22 September 2018, participants attended briefings from senior industry and government players, eminent academics, and peak community and advocacy providers. The connections forged will help to foster ongoing international links with leading housing policy officials and researchers.

The participant group consisted of senior Australian housing and homelessness policy officials (chief executive or equivalent) from the governments of five states and one territory, led by AHURI's executive director.

- **Michael Fotheringham**
Executive Director, Australia Housing and Urban Research Institute
- **Louise Gilding**
Executive Director, Housing ACT, Community Services Directorate, Australian Capital Territory Government
- **Jamie Chalker**
Chief Executive Officer, Northern Territory Department of Local Government, Housing and Community
- **Mychelle Curran**
Executive Director Strategy, NSW Land and Housing Corporation, New South Wales Government Department of Family and Community Services.
- **Greg Cash**
Deputy Director General Housing, Government of Western Australia Department of Communities,
- **Nick Foa**
Deputy Secretary Housing and Infrastructure, Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services

Each participant documented their learnings for one or two key study themes, and these form the basis of this report. In addition, learnings will be presented at a session of the 2019 National Housing Conference in Darwin.

1.1.1 Key focus areas

Key areas of investigation for the tour included:

- affordable housing and homelessness strategies
- housing reform: in particular, the development of multi-provider/partner models with a focus on securing new forms of capital funding; and including an examination of the legislative and governance arrangements that support successful models
- housing and economic programs that respond to Indigenous peoples.

Two or three key themes formed the basis of the learning program for each destination visited.

- Vancouver
 - housing markets
 - affordable housing
 - First Nations social enterprise
- Calgary
 - homelessness
 - community health integration
- Ottawa
 - funding and finance
 - Indigenous housing
- Toronto
 - urban renewal
 - research

1.2 Itinerary

The Study Tour itinerary was developed by AHURI, with feedback and input from participants, and with advice from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), as well as a Canadian policy research consultant, Steve Pomeroy, who has a long-term relationship with AHURI through the institute's international activities.

Senior members of a range of Canadian organisations—representing provincial governments, housing providers, homelessness services, First Nations organisations, and federal government—were approached, and a tour schedule developed.

Day programs in key locations were organised by AHURI, in collaboration with peak local organisations including: CMHC in Vancouver and Ottawa, the Aboriginal Housing Management Association (AHMA) in Vancouver, the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH), and the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association (CHRA) Indigenous Caucus.

A summary of the itinerary is provided below (see Appendix 1 for a detailed itinerary).

Vancouver, British Columbia

Key themes: housing markets; affordable housing; First Nations social enterprise.

Visits:

- Steve Pomeroy—Focus Consulting
- British Columbia Housing Management Commission (BC Housing)
- BC Non-Profit Housing Association
- Co-operative Housing Federation of BC
- Aboriginal Housing Management Association
- Lu'ma Native Housing Society
- Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society
- Skwachàys Lodge (social enterprise)
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

Calgary, Alberta

Key themes: homelessness; community health integration.

Visits:

- The Alex Community Food Centre
- The Prelude (Housing First development)
- The Alex Community Health Centre
- Community Housing Affordability Collective
- HomeSpace Society and Horizon Housing Society
- Calgary Homeless Foundation
- Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness

Ottawa, Ontario and Gatineau, Quebec

Key themes: funding and finance; Indigenous housing.

Visits:

- Employment and Social Development Canada (federal government department)
- Office of the Federal Minister of Housing
- Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Housing
- University of Ottawa
- Canadian Housing and Renewal Association—Indigenous Caucus
- Gignul Non-Profit Housing Corporation
- Madawan Lodge
- The Oaks by Shepherds of Good Hope
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

Toronto, Ontario

Key themes: urban renewal; research.

Visits:

- Regent Park (urban revitalisation project)
- Toronto Community Housing
- Canadian Observatory on Homelessness at York University
- Downtown/Old Toronto (public housing renewal precincts)

1.3 The Canadian housing and homelessness context

Canada's social housing sector in the period since World War II is strikingly similar to Australia's. Social housing (which includes public and community housing) represents just under 5 per cent of all Canadian housing, and almost 20 per cent of all rental housing. It is owned and operated by a combination of public providers (provincial/municipal) and community-based non-profit (including co-operative) providers, with portfolio sizes ranging from very small (providers with fewer than 10 homes) to very large (a public corporation with over 50,000 homes) (Pomeroy 2018).

The heterogenous structure and composition of Canada's social housing sector reflects the variety of funding programs that were available over the formative period from the late 1950s to the mid-1990s. Launched in early 2018, Canada's National Housing Strategy (NHS) was formed on the basis of the 2017 federal budget and aims to bring together the public, private and non-profit sectors. The strategy formed a key context for the Study Tour.

Like Australia, Canada is governed through a federal parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy, and is a member of the British Commonwealth. Like Australia, Canada features expansive remote regions, and experiences climate challenges and Indigenous relations issues.

Canada's population live in similar tenures and experience similar housing patterns to Australia's, but with subtle differences in areas such as:

- the built form: Canada utilises more multi-unit structures (e.g. apartments, condominiums)
- type of social housing: Canada relies more on community sector housing and less on public housing (which is typically delivered through municipal governments rather than provincial governments)
- private rental ownership: rental properties in Canada are more often institution or corporate owned, in contrast to Australia's unusual 'mum and dad' investor profile.

Social housing in Canada accounts for approximately 5 per cent of total housing stock (down from 6% at its peak, due to expansion in non-social-housing construction)—of which, public housing represents about one-third. In Australia, the proportion of social housing stock is similar (around 4%), but it is comprised of 85 per cent public housing (AHURI 2017). There is a stronger co-operative housing movement in Canada than has emerged in Australia.

Driven by various policy shifts and economic factors, social housing in Canada has shown growth since World War II (see Table 1: Section 4.1). Since the mid-70s this growth has been largely in the non-profit and co-op sectors.

This history has created a number of legacy effects, including long-term funding agreements that are near to expiring. There is a perception in Canada that the social housing system lacks professionalism (this may be linked to the absence of a national

regulatory system). The sector is characterised by a large number of very small community providers, as well as public/municipal housing providers. There is a widely recognised need to modernise and restructure the sector.

There are significant legacy issues relating to Indigenous housing. Three separate treaties exist for the Inuit, First Nations and Métis peoples.¹ Collectively, these groups represent just under 5 per cent of the population; however, as in Australia, they are disproportionately represented in the incidences of core housing need and homelessness. Most Indigenous people live in rural and remote areas, often with little or no economic base. Indigenous housing issues are a federal responsibility (unlike housing generally, where provinces and municipalities lead). Further, this responsibility is split between Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada and the CMHC.

There has been a gradual increase in visible homelessness in Canada since the 1980s, although there is no formal homelessness count (or official government definition). The increase has been reported particularly since the termination of federal funding for new social housing in 1994 (Pomeroy 2018). The response to homelessness is largely reliant on non-profit emergency shelters, which have evolved from faith-based missions. Some municipal governments have also built and operate emergency shelters (e.g. Toronto).

1.3.1 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)

CMHC is a Crown corporation governed by a board and responsible to parliament through the Minister of Housing (currently Jean-Yves Duclos). As a government business enterprise (GBE), its functions include:

- mortgage loan insurance—providing insurance and client services to protect borrowers, lenders and diversity in housing options
- market analysis—providing evidence-based analysis and insights to support decision-making
- securitisation—helping ensure lenders have access to sufficient funds for mortgage lending
- assisted housing—helping Canadians in need gain access to suitable housing they can afford.

1.3.2 Canada's National Housing Strategy (NHS)

Canada's current federal government was elected in late 2015, bringing political change and a renewed interest in housing policy. The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, and the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (and Minister of Housing), Jean-Yves Duclos, have been central to developing a new national dialog on housing, including implementation of a national housing strategy. The NHS aims to bring together the public, private and non-profit sectors, unifying the currently disjointed social housing system and providing more affordable and accessible housing for Canadians.

Professor Duclos was director of the Department of Economics at Laval University, President-elect of the Canadian Economics Association, and a Fellow of the Royal

¹ The First Nations (Premières Nations) people are the main Indigenous group in Canada, the original inhabitants of the lands south of the Arctic Circle. The Inuit people, from the Arctic area, are distinct. The Métis, who are of mixed European and Indigenous ancestry, are another distinct ethnicity. Collectively, the First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples constitute the Indigenous peoples in Canada (or Aboriginal Canadians).

Society of Canada before joining the Liberal Party of Canada as a candidate in the 2015 federal election.

Under the guiding hand of Duclos, the 2017 federal budget introduced a funding framework for housing, and the NHS, launched in early 2018, added objectives, targets and outcomes to this framework. The strategy identifies over \$40 billion of funding over 11 years, which includes considerable province and territory dollars. Importantly, the NHS is framed as a *national strategy*, not a federal strategy. As such, a significant portion of the funds is subject to the negotiation of bilateral agreements between federal government and each province and territory. These funds, to be provided by the provinces and territories for specific housing programs, constitute \$7.4 billion of the total funding.

Only a relatively small portion (approximately \$15 billion) of the \$40 billion in funding is 'new' money. The balance is made up of loan funding (to finance renovation and new development), existing funds, and potential province/territory cost-sharing funds. Funding is back-end loaded, with much of it coming into the system three to five years downstream. In the initial years (2018–22), new funding is minimal. Rather, this period is dedicated to building federal–provincial partnerships and bilateral agreements.

Funds are allocated to CMHC for payment of ongoing subsidies to social housing providers, as well as provinces and territories, under long-term agreements. These expenditures total \$8.4 billion over the 11-year NHS period.

A number of long-term federal–provincial agreements are maturing, resulting in ongoing annual reductions in the amount that CMHC pays out to providers. These reductions are referred to as 'baseline savings' in the NHS. The 2017 Budget included a commitment to reinvest these annual 'savings' back into housing—effectively stabilising funding at current levels.

The NHS includes provision of loan financing through CMHC to assist in new construction and stock maintenance. The 2016 Budget included a new lending program to stimulate rental construction, which was implemented in 2017. This was expanded as part of the NHS, with CMHC to provide low-rate or interest-free financing for a total of \$11.2 billion in loans (i.e. repayable) and around \$500 million in subsidies (i.e. interest write-down and forgiveness portions) over the 11 years.

The NHS articulates support for social housing, including a strong commitment to preserve and enhance existing social housing: through continuing non-discretionary funding (\$8.4 billion) to projects still under agreement, and reinvestment of expiring subsidy amounts through the Canada Community Housing Initiatives (CCHI). CCHI will support operation and renewal of non-profit community stock, co-op community stock, and public housing. Canada's public housing, which houses a high proportion of deep-need tenants, is the oldest part of the system and is in need of substantial renewal (Pomeroy 2018).

The NHS approach to homelessness is still evolving and is yet to be announced in detail. Minister Duclos has established an advisory group on homelessness, which has been charged with redesigning the existing Homelessness Partnering Strategy (with a budget of \$2.2 billion).

The scheme's approach to Indigenous housing is also unclear. A housing strategy specifically targeting Indigenous households not living on-reserve is currently being developed and will be a later addition to the NHS (with a budget of \$225 million).

Funding for monitoring and reporting on the NHS, allocated to both CMHC and Statistics Canada, is expected to help develop data collection instruments and support analysis and research.

1.4 The report

The AHURI Study Tour gave participants a glimpse into the complex and varied Canadian housing system. The numerous site visits and informative interactions with sector representatives provided a range of insights into the successes and failures of the country's housing system over the past five decades. This report presents observations, key learnings and applications for Australia on several of the key themes examined during the course of the Study Tour.

In Chapter 2, Greg Cash explores how the Canadian housing sector finances affordable housing and supports home ownership. In Chapter 3, Louise Gilding outlines the country's various successes and missteps in tackling the ever-present issue of homelessness in its cities and urban areas. Chapter 4, by Mychelle Curran, discusses strategies for delivering social and affordable housing. Finally, Jamie Chalker presents insights into Canada's innovative and often successful approach to Indigenous housing.

2 Market finance and home ownership

Greg Cash

2.1 Introduction

There are many similarities between Australia and Canada, with our shared roots in British colonialism, similar political systems (each with three tiers of government), and large land masses with populations focussed in particular areas (Australians in cities that hug the coast; Canadians in a thin band close to the United States border). A close-up look at life in Canada provides the opportunity to identify challenges that we share in terms of our evolving societies and economic environments, and the impact of these on our housing markets.

Homelessness, particularly in metropolitan centres, is an ever-present and complex issue around the world. Large, rapidly growing cities like Toronto, Vancouver, Melbourne and Sydney are struggling to cope with housing demand and require substantial infrastructure investment. Challenges include declining affordability, resistance to development, and isolation of low- to moderate-income households. Urban and regional areas face their own problems. For example, high levels of disadvantage, overcrowding and homelessness amongst Indigenous populations living in urban and regional areas reinforce historical conflicts. Furthermore, regional centres and towns are subject to housing market volatility as a result of rapid increases in mining and agricultural activity or investment. Long distances, technological change and declining populations discourage investment in regional housing markets. Critical to responding to these challenges is the ability of governments to manage competing priorities and to support and maintain functional and viable housing markets that respond to the needs of all citizens.

Focussing on insights gathered from site visits and discussions with CMHC, British Columbia Housing, Toronto Community Housing (TCH) and a number of peak agencies and small community housing providers, this chapter examines how the Canadian housing sector accesses market finance for investment in affordable housing and supports home ownership—and considers what lessons can be applied within the Australian housing landscape.

The Australian Government announced, as part of the 2017/18 Budget, the establishment of a National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC) as a key initiative to increase affordable housing supply (Australian Government 2017). NHFIC will act as a bond aggregator to facilitate long-term and lower-cost finance for community housing organisations to invest in additional affordable housing supply. NHFIC represents a new approach to Commonwealth Government support for affordable housing in Australia and has been modelled on the United Kingdom's Housing Finance Corporation, which has operated a successful bond aggregator model since 1987.

The bond aggregator model has been supported by leading researchers as providing the best way of attracting large-scale institutional investment in affordable housing for Australia in current circumstances (Lawson 2014). The establishment of NHFIC has also been strongly supported by the community housing sector (Proud 2017).

While Australia has sought to replicate the United Kingdom model, the AHURI Study Tour provided an opportunity to explore and consider how Canada, with its recently launched NHS, is supporting institutional investment in affordable housing supply.

2.2 Observations

2.2.1 BC Housing

The British Columbia Housing Management Commission (BC Housing), established in 1967, is one of the largest providers of housing assistance in Canada. Operating under the British Columbia Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, it directly or indirectly provides support to more than 104,000 households in the province, through provision of emergency shelter, housing, and rent supplements. The organisation directly manages 7,000 units of accommodation and has an additional 68,000 properties that are managed by community housing organisations.

At the time of our visit, Vancouver was facing a significant affordability crisis, with strong population growth increasing demand for housing in the city. The rental vacancy rate at the time was less than 0.5 per cent. With a strong economy and the mildest climate in the country, Vancouver continues to attract new residents. However, it is an essentially land-locked metropolis, with its development footprint constrained by mountains, national parks, the coast and the United States border.

BC Housing, and the British Columbia Government, are working to increase supply of rental housing and support home ownership; encourage density and urban regeneration; improve the quality of housing construction; and enhance delivery of homelessness services. A number of these policy drivers and initiatives appear to directly or indirectly support home ownership and facilitate market finance for affordable housing supply.

Planning support

The provincial government of British Columbia requires municipal governments to provide local housing needs assessments, which are used to inform local planning, approval processes and development proposals. Municipal governments have limited capacity to effectively complete these assessments and often require support from external consultants. Having this information available to inform local planning and development priorities, and to support and guide private and community housing investment, provides government with the ability to potentially target market gaps, maximise the efficiency of capital, and identify untapped market opportunities. Local housing plans and strategies, as part of the town planning process, are not unheard of in Australia and can provide a means of identifying local need and opportunities for affordable housing.

Another innovative approach used by BC Housing is 'tenure zoning', whereby municipal governments are able to identify local 'rental zones' in their planning schemes. Under this model, the provincial government allows municipal governments to designate sites for rental development only. British Columbia is the only province in Canada trialling this initiative. It will be interesting to see how the Vancouver trial plays out, given the Australian market's tentative moves towards build-to-rent type financing models.

Vancouver uses inclusionary zoning to prioritise the supply of affordable housing in its redevelopment areas. Under this policy, 20 per cent of any redevelopment precinct is to be allocated to affordable housing. The affordable housing obligation is rendered through a density bonus that is applied across the developable area, with additional floor area provided in exchange for the affordable housing obligation. In addition, the planning scheme allows negotiated outcomes for each development site.

Together, these approaches put a positive onus on the market to not only make provision for affordable and rental housing within their development areas, but also to

enable the housing to be provided by community housing organisations or private developers who deliver affordable housing outcomes.

Direct investment

BC Housing provides direct investment in affordable housing supply through the provision of construction finance for the development of affordable housing projects. Under British Columbian legislation, BC Housing is able to lend money to community housing organisations and private developers if they are delivering an affordable project or if a percentage of the project is affordable.

Via a range of programs, BC Housing provides low-cost development finance, with funding sourced through CMHC, to support projects that target general and specific client outcomes. Projects that focus on affordable rental, homelessness, vulnerable women, seniors and Indigenous groups are prioritised for development finance. Given the current pressures the province faces in terms of affordability, low rental vacancies and homelessness, BC Housing aims to provide funding to deliver 3,000–4,000 dwellings for target groups over the next 12 months (September 2018–September 2019).

At the time of our visit, BC Housing had approximately 300 projects in the pipeline, with an average of around 3,000 units under development each year. As part of a bilateral agreement with the federal government, BC Housing provides a regulatory function in ensuring the quality of housing construction in British Columbia. In the 1990s, British Columbia experienced a raft of instances where poor-quality construction and inadequate lining of houses allowed water/cold ingress, with many of the affected homes irreparable. Under the *Homeowner Protection Act 1998*, BC Housing took over the role of the Homeowner Protection Office. Its Licensing and Consumer Services branch is charged with responsibility for housing construction regulation and consumer protection. Similar to Australia, responsibility for actual building inspections remains with the municipal governments.

Home-ownership assistance

BC Housing provides limited direct assistance for people to achieve home ownership. A previous scheme (discontinued in March 2018)—the Home Owner Mortgage and Equity (HOME) Partnership program—provided loans to first-time home buyers to help them meet the deposit requirements of home ownership. The loan operated as a second mortgage, repayable over 20 years, with interest and payments deferred for the first five years.

The organisation has a robust project approval and governance process in place, which includes a number of stage-gate approval steps that test and assess proposals before the final investment decision is made.

2.2.2 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

Established in 1946, the CMHC is a Crown corporation of the Canadian government that is governed by a board and reports to parliament through the Housing Minister. It has been a cornerstone of the Canadian government's delivery of programs and initiatives to support affordable housing supply and home ownership for more than 70 years.

CMHC has a dual focus: to facilitate access to housing for all Canadians; and to contribute to the efficiency and stability of Canada's housing finance markets. It seeks to achieve this through the provision of: mortgage insurance; seed funding and financing to develop and maintain rental housing; the Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH) scheme; securitisation of mortgage-backed securities; regulatory support and

oversight of mortgage products and arrangements; and collection and publication of housing market data, research and information.

As a result of the NHS, launched in 2018, CMHC officials recognise that there is an expectation that the corporation will shift from being a commercially focussed financial institution delivering policy outcomes to a policy-led program-design and funding body.

Mortgage insurance

CMHC provides three types of mortgage insurance, aimed at improving access to housing for home owners and renters, increasing consumer choice, and supporting private and institutional investment in rental housing. Home-owners mortgage insurance (known in Australia as lenders mortgage insurance) supports access to home ownership for people with limited deposits. Portfolio insurance provides coverage on a pool of high loan-to-value ratio loans, allowing smaller lenders to compete with larger ones, thus increasing consumer choice. Multi-unit portfolio insurance provides coverage for lending on multi-unit portfolios, supporting investment in rental housing.

In providing mortgage insurance, Ben Williams, Director Housing Indicators and Analytics advised that CMHC seeks a reasonable return for reasonable risk, which is not maximised for profit and is benchmarked against the private sector rates. CMHC mortgage insurance products generate profits of around \$1 billion per annum for the Canadian government.

For consumers, CMHC home-owners mortgage insurance is available nationwide, with standard prices across all markets. This works to improve access to home ownership for those without a large deposit and ensures that home ownership is supported across all of Canada.

Premiums are set on a sliding scale based on the loan-to-value ratio; however, an average 90–95 per cent loan-to-value ratio loan (i.e. 5–10% deposit) will result in a premium of 4 per cent of total loan cost and can be capitalised into the loan. This is comparable to rates charged in Australia. Premium discounts are available for energy efficient homes, and insurance is available for alternative housing tenures, with chattel mortgages supported.

There are only two other major providers of mortgage insurance in Canada, but CMHC is considered to be the price-setter. Senior officials indicated that CMHC intends to reduce its exposure to mortgage insurance as a proportion of its business in the future as it refocuses on becoming a more policy-led program design and funding body. However, the benefit of CMHC's role in the market is clear—perhaps best demonstrated by the fact that it was the only Canadian company to continue providing mortgage insurance during the Global Financial Crisis.

Multi-unit portfolio insurance helps reduce risk for investors and supports long-term financing of multi-unit rental housing by the private sector. This type of insurance is often used to de-risk long-term financing of multi-unit development projects that have received construction finance from CMHC—this improves the efficiency of CMHC's financing programs, allowing for reinvestment in additional rental housing supply.

Seed funding and financing

In order to support new affordable housing proposals and to support the ongoing sustainability of the existing affordable housing projects, CMHC provides interest free and non-repayable loans to help eligible organisations (such as community housing, Indigenous Organisations, Provincial Governments). Funding assistance is available to assist with the costs of predevelopment works for new affordable housing projects and

to undertake analysis of business operations and asset planning to support continued financial viability of affordable housing projects.

Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH)

Bilateral agreements between federal and provincial governments focus combined government support for social and affordable housing through the Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH) scheme. Federal funds, provided through CMHC, are matched by provincial and territory governments to increase access to affordable housing.

‘Through initiatives like new construction, renovation, homeownership assistance, rent supplements, shelter allowances, accessibility modifications, and accommodations for victims of family violence, funding under the IAH is used by provinces and territories to:

- *increase the supply of affordable housing across Canada;*
- *improve and preserve the quality of affordable housing;*
- *improve housing affordability for vulnerable Canadians; and*
- *foster safe, independent living.’ (CMHC 2018)*

Among other initiatives, the scheme offers low-cost development finance to support the construction of new affordable housing projects and the upgrade or refurbishment of existing affordable housing. Rent supplements aim to bridge the gap between what tenants can afford to pay and what the actual cost of housing is.

Securitisation

One of CMHC’s key activities in supporting the efficient functioning of housing finance markets in Canada is its securitisation of loans. CMHC’s securitisation activities include packaging up home loan portfolios and privately financed loans for affordable housing projects. These securitised loan ‘packages’ are marketed as CMHC guaranteed bonds in the capital markets—that is, as mortgage-backed securities, with recourse sitting with CMHC.

Full liability for these loans sits on CMHC’s balance sheet and provision is made through a capital reserve, as occurs in the private sector. There is a limited market for secondary-backed securities in Canada and the CMHC model helps to support liquidity in the housing finance market, freeing up capital to be recycled into new lending. This support is particularly helpful for non-deposit-taking lenders, non-bank institutions and credit unions. Importantly, by freeing up capital, it allows further lending for both home ownership and additional affordable housing.

The participation of CMHC in both mortgage insurance and securitisation of mortgage-backed securities builds the Canadian government’s capability to reduce and manage risk in the housing finance market. As a by-product of its activities, CMHC provides soft regulation and prudential support to the market by assessing the nature of loans written and the criteria used to make credit assessments. For example, lending is restricted for borrowers who could not withstand a 2 per cent increase in interest rate. Interestingly,

as a result of the Hayne Royal Commission,² Australian banks are now applying a similar buffer rate to their credit assessment processes.

The Canadian government can also use CMHC's securitisation activities to influence fiscal policy, with the criteria for lending able to be flexed to increase or decrease activity in the housing market.

2.2.3 Toronto Community Housing

One of the last stops on the tour, TCH offered a local provider perspective to round out the federal government (CMHC) and provincial government (BC Housing) perspectives already captured. TCH is the largest social housing provider in Canada, providing assistance to nearly 60,000 households. Wholly owned by the City of Toronto, the corporation operates as a not-for-profit. With its large and ageing asset portfolio, the organisation has a significant risk exposure, and in recent years found itself with an asset base that was moving toward 'a poor state of repair, due to underfunding rather than poor management' (Hugh Lawson, Director Strategic Planning and Stakeholder Relations). Some buildings were forced to close as a consequence of their poor condition. This prompted the development of a 10-year \$2.6 billion investment strategy aimed at upgrading the condition of the portfolio.

In addition to this capital upgrade program, TCH is undertaking targeted revitalisation initiatives, such as the Regent Park redevelopment. The Regent Park project aims to transform an ageing neighbourhood previously made up of only social housing into a mixed-income, mixed-used community, through a public-private partnership. Crucial to the project was a capital grant of \$160,000 per unit from the provincial and federal governments, to replace outdated and poor-quality housing. The grant enabled TCH to pre-fund and build before sale one of the first buildings in the Regent Park renewal. This helped de-risk the broader project by demonstrating what could be delivered, rather than having to meet presales targets in order to finance and commence development. The funding allowed for physical transformation of the precinct to begin before the need to deliver sales to purchasers. This model helped to encourage investment by home owners and private investors in the development's private housing allocation, while ensuring the number of social housing dwellings in the neighbourhood was maintained.

The organisation also seeks private sector support to fund and sponsor community programs, amenities and services. For example, the Toronto Bluejays (a Major League Baseball team) provide sponsorship for a rookie ball program that involves 1,000 children each summer.

TCH can access finance for housing projects through CMHC or through the municipal government (at times the municipal government has offered a cheaper rate than the CMHC). It also receives additional financial support from the municipal government to assist in paying property taxes and mortgage payments.

2.3 Significant learnings

Canada's affordable housing system has been supported and enabled by the unique interaction and participation of all three levels of government (federal, provincial and municipal) at various times over the last four decades. On the surface, this may appear

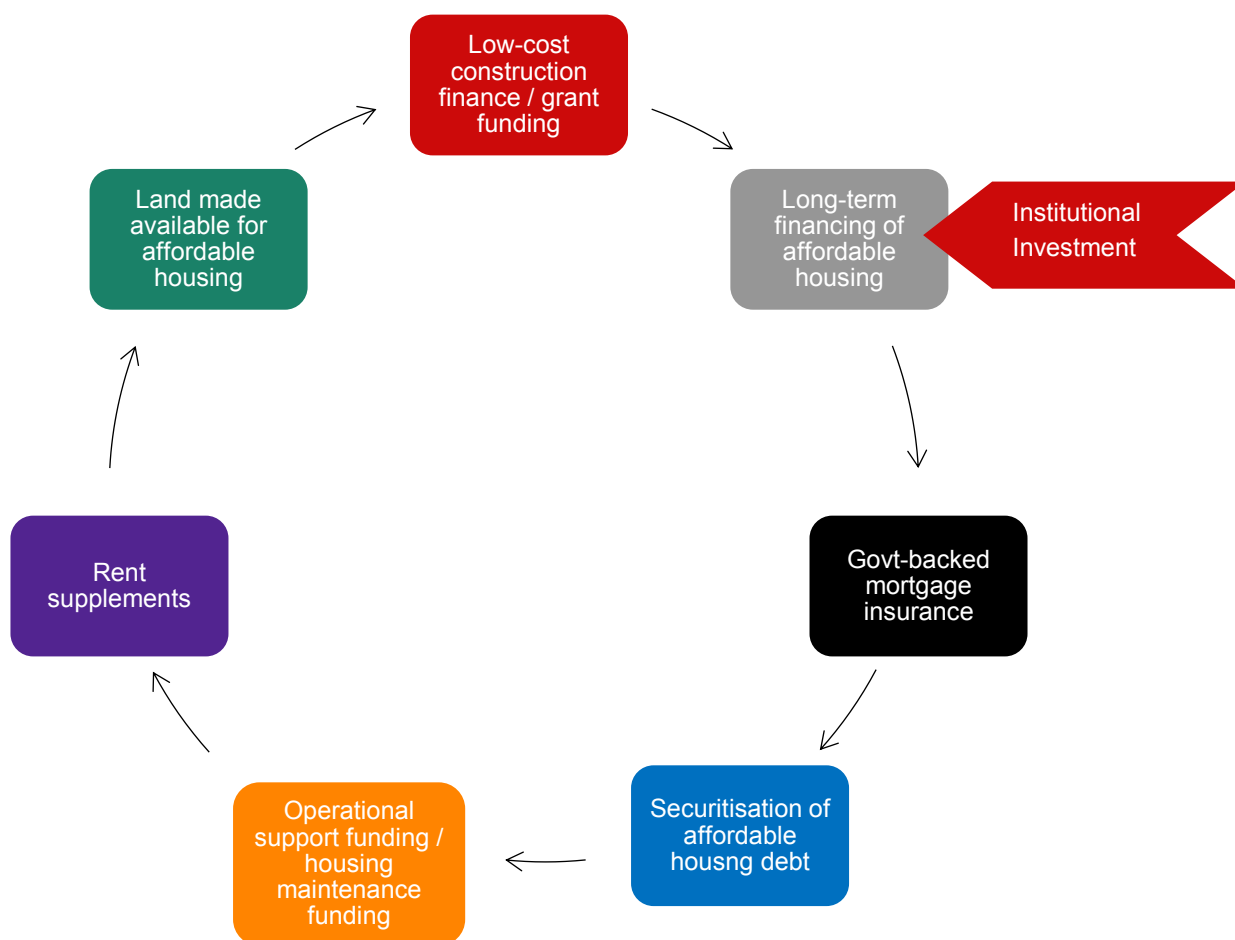
² The Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry (2017–19).

to create a duplication of effort, a misalignment and lack of coordination of policy intent, and a lack of overarching systemic coherence. However, the movement of individual governments in and out of housing policy has created a mosaic of housing models and funding arrangements that have built capacity and resilience in the nation's affordable housing system.

'The involvement of three levels of government builds resilience in the housing system, protecting against changes and impacts caused by individual levels of government. It commits all three levels of government to playing a role in housing policy.' (Dylan Marando, Director of Policy for Canada's Minister of Housing)

While we identified a number of potential limitations, weaknesses and inefficiencies in the Canadian approach to funding and financing affordable housing, the impacts of the various housing policy initiatives have ultimately led to a robust affordable housing sector with significant dwelling and equity assets, and capable and committed providers. For individual providers, inconsistent approaches, and changes in policy direction, program delivery (and funding), and capital investment and financing models have provided funding uncertainty, a lack of coherence and a lack of long-term sustainability. However, there appears to be an element of success in the unplanned and overlapping policy and program activity that has occurred in the Canadian housing system. The various elements work together to make the system viable and functional to support institutional investment—as outlined in Figure 1 and discussed in more detail below.

Figure 1: Institutional investment in the Canadian affordable housing sector



Source: Author.

2.3.1 Land and buildings made available for affordable housing

Through the use of inclusionary zoning, municipal governments (e.g. Vancouver) facilitate the availability of land for affordable housing projects. In Vancouver, the application of a mandatory target of 20 per cent of land value uplift being dedicated to affordable housing ensures that developers make sites within their renewal precincts available for acquisition by/provision to affordable housing providers. The land then acts as capital/equity for affordable housing development.

Alternatively, or additionally, municipal governments may directly make land or buildings available on a leased or transfer basis for particular projects (e.g. Vancouver’s modular housing; Skwachàys Lodge: see Section 4.3 and 5.3, respectively).

2.3.2 Low-cost construction finance and capital grant funding

The provision of low-cost construction finance, by various levels of government (potentially with deferred or delayed payment terms), ensures that affordable housing developments can be delivered at a significantly reduced cost. During our visit, BC Housing was providing construction finance at 1.36 per cent interest plus fees, which was significantly lower than comparable private sector finance.

Grant funding for affordable housing projects also helps to reduce costs, by underwriting and speeding up projects, and reducing the equity required for projects to proceed. For example, TCH was able to pre-fund and build before sale one of the first buildings in the Regent Park urban renewal development, which helped to de-risk the project.

2.3.3 Long-term financing of affordable housing

While the long-term financing of affordable housing in Canada is generally funded through the private market, the provision of government-backed mortgage insurance on multi-unit portfolios helps to de-risk the investment for private financiers. The confidence this provides for multi-unit investment supports development proposals, offering a mechanism to bring forward commitment to presales and thereby helping to de-risk and repay the low-cost construction finance. Repaid construction finance can then be recycled into new development projects.

2.3.4 Government-backed mortgage insurance

The provision of government-backed mortgage insurance (by CMHC) on affordable rental projects through multi-unit portfolio insurance helps to de-risk private and institutional financing of multi-unit rental housing. In addition, when complemented by the market support provided by mortgage insurance cover for home ownership, it helps to reduce overall market volatility, further enhancing the stability of residential housing investment.

2.3.5 Securitisation of affordable housing rental portfolios

Through the establishment of government-backed mortgage securities (by CMHC) specifically associated with financing affordable housing rental portfolios, government is directly de-risking and incentivising private and institutional investment in affordable housing. In addition, the ongoing securitisation process frees up capital for further lending for additional affordable housing, which helps finance the construction of additional affordable housing, and so on.

2.3.6 Operational support funding and maintenance funding

Operational support funding (from federal, provincial and municipal governments), operating subsidies and housing maintenance funding contribute to the broader financing of affordable housing. Paid to social and affordable housing providers in acknowledgement of the operating cost shortfalls associated with such housing, this funding enhances the ability of providers to meet their ongoing operating costs (including debt servicing costs for privately financed affordable housing). Although only provided for a portion of social housing portfolios, and usually linked to higher-cost programs, this type of funding has clearly provided support to balance the ongoing sustainability of community housing organisations. Furthermore, it can help to offset the inherent cross-subsidisation that tends to occur in mixed-portfolio organisations. In this way, operational support funding provides much-needed cashflow to sustain community housing business models, ensuring the organisations are financially viable and supporting their creditworthiness. Effectively, the funding helps de-risk community housing organisations to lenders.

2.3.7 Rent supplements

The provision of rent supplements (by provincial governments) to tenants to enhance affordability—somewhat similar to the Commonwealth Rent Assistance scheme in Australia—facilitates additional revenue and cashflow into community housing

organisations. As with operational support funding, access to this revenue supports the viability of community housing organisations, helping to maintain their debt-service capacity.

2.4 Applications for Australia

While Australia, with the recent establishment of the NHFIC, is following the United Kingdom's bond aggregator model, Canada has evolved a range of different methods for financing affordable housing. Although Canada's model relies in large part on securitisation—generally accepted as the non-preferred option for Australia (Lawson, Berry et al. 2014)—there are lessons for Australia in the range of effective levers used across the system.

Canada's mesh of affordable housing policies, programs and initiatives are administered by the three levels of government. It would appear that the collective interactions of the various elements have not only built resilience in the affordable housing system but, importantly, created a network of financial supports and enhancements that actively encourage and incentivise institutional investment in affordable housing.

Canada's complex, interwoven system seems in many ways to meet the brief laid out by Lawson, who argues that for governments to enable large-scale institutional investment in affordable housing, they must play a leading role in the development and provision of arrangements such as bond (securitisation) instruments, financial intermediaries and guarantee enhancements, in a manner that delivers long-term low-cost finance (Lawson 2013). The result of these actions is to significantly reduce risk for investors, thereby enabling them to accept lower yields. CMHC's success arguably lies in its skill at determining risk exposure in the mortgage insurance market. The organisation is extremely good at this and returns a profit of 11–13 per cent a year.

An important lesson to learn from Canada's affordable housing finance model is how positive outcomes can be achieved through cooperation and collaboration between the various levels of government. The Australian system would likewise benefit from enhancing communication between councils, states/territories and federal government, and putting a greater focus on direct federal investment in state government initiatives.

3 Addressing homelessness

Louise Gilding

3.1 Introduction

The causes of homelessness in Canada, like Australia, are complex and include: poverty, shifts in the housing market, and changing delivery systems for human services (Shah and Hodge 1997). However, Canada's climate makes shelter a fundamental prerequisite for survival. Following the deinstitutionalisation of Canada's mental health services in 1980, the termination of federal funding for new social and affordable housing in 1994, structural shifts in the economy, and reduced government spending on social services, the nation has seen a visible increase in homelessness (Gaetz, DeJ et al. 2016).

For many years Canada had limited programs targeting homelessness. Most emergency shelters were provided by faith-based organisations; some were provided through municipalities. With homelessness growing and shelters at capacity, the 1998 ice storms in Eastern Canada brought the issue to crisis point. The storms resulted in the deaths of a significant number of homeless people, which drove the formation of a multitude of advocacy organisations, such as the Calgary Homeless Foundation and the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee—the latter releasing a State of Emergency Declaration calling for urgent action to tackle homelessness (Toronto Disaster Relief Committee 1998). The United Nations urged Canada to address the homelessness problem, declaring it a national emergency, with an estimated 100 people dying annually (CHF 2018).

Amid rising media coverage (Richter, Burns et al. 2011) and community demand for urgent action, in 2000 the federal government launched the National Homelessness Initiative (NHI), the major component of which was the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) (CMHC 2011; Homeless Hub c.2016). The aim of the NHI was to enhance community capacity to address local homelessness issues, foster investment in facilities and services for homeless people, and increase knowledge about homelessness in Canada. The NHI provided federal funding of \$753 million in the first three years for new and existing community-based programs. In 2003, the NHI was renewed to 2006, with a further \$539.8 million in funding.

In 2007 the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) replaced the NHI (Homeless Hub c.2016). Significantly, the HPS applied a Housing First approach (which prioritises permanent housing), designed to provide the supports needed to move homeless and at-risk people towards full participation in Canadian society (St John's Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness 2000).

In 2018 Canada delivered its first ever national housing strategy, which included a budget of \$2.2 billion over 10 years for Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy (Government of Canada 2019). The Reaching Home program commenced on 1 April 2019, replacing the HPS. Critically, the strategy provides a more flexible approach, focussing on the delivery of services for those experiencing and at risk of homelessness.

The AHURI Study Tour provided an opportunity to observe firsthand the results of Canada's homelessness strategies over the past two decades, with site visits to the following programs and organisations.

→ Calgary Homeless Foundation

- The Alex (Calgary)
- The Oaks by Shepherds of Good Hope (Ottawa)
- Lu'ma Aboriginal Children's Village (Vancouver)
- Department of Employment and Social Development Canada (Gatineau)
- Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (Calgary)
- Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (Toronto)

3.2 Definitions and statistics

Canada does not have an official national definition of *homelessness*, but the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH)³ defines homelessness as 'the situation of an individual or family without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it' (Gaetz, Barr et al. 2012). Without an agreed definition of homelessness or methodology for estimating prevalence, Canadian homelessness numbers have been contentious.

Photo 1: Unsheltered in Vancouver



Australia, on the other hand, does have a national definition of homelessness and is fortunate to have robust and comparable (albeit not perfect) homelessness statistics—with estimates that rely on census data and administrative data collected through the

³ The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness is 'a non-profit, non-partisan research institute that is committed to conducting and mobilizing research so as to contribute to solutions to homelessness'. It includes researchers, service providers, policy- and decision-makers, people with lived experience of homelessness, and graduate and undergraduate students from across Canada (Gaetz, Barr et al. 2012).

Specialist Homelessness Information Platform. In contrast, Canada's data collections are in the process of maturing, as more communities participate in point-in-time (PIT) counts, which determine the number of people experiencing homelessness on any given night. The PIT counts provide data about the number of people sleeping in shelters and sleeping outside. This approach is similar to the Registry Week methodology used by several Australian jurisdictions (Mercy Foundation 2017). However, unlike the Australian data collection process, which is overseen by federal government agencies (i.e. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare), PIT counts are not overseen by Statistics Canada and often lack methodological consistency (Falvo 2016).

Each system of data collection has its pros and cons—what is not in dispute is that homelessness is generally on the rise in both countries. According to the COH, on any given night approximately 35,000 people in Canada experience some form of homelessness (Gaetz, DeJ et al. 2016). At least 235,000 Canadians are estimated to experience homelessness in a year (63 people for every 10,000). In Australia, 116,000 people experience homelessness in a year (50 people for every 10,000) (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016). There are, however, local communities in both countries where homelessness has fallen in recent years: Canberra in Australia and Calgary in Canada.

Over the last decade, the two nations have both experienced shifts in the cohorts experiencing homelessness, from mostly older single men to a diverse range of people, including more women, families and young people. Furthermore, both countries are experiencing a rise in homelessness resulting from relationship breakdown and domestic violence.

Like Australia, Indigenous Canadians are disproportionately represented in homelessness statistics. Indigenous peoples make up 6 per cent of the general population but represent 28–34 per cent of the shelter population (Gaetz and DeJ 2016). In Australia, Indigenous people make up 3.3 per cent of the population and 25 per cent of clients accessing specialist homelessness services (AIHW 2017).

The Centre for Justice and Social Compassion estimates that 45 per cent of all Canadians experiencing homelessness are disabled or diagnosed with a mental illness (Centre for Justice and Social Compassion 2014).⁴ This was particularly evident in Vancouver, where the streets and parks were crowded with people with high and complex service needs, disabilities and mental illness—all seeking shelter (see Photo 1). In Australia, 4 per cent of all specialist homelessness service clients identified that they have a severe or profound disability (AIHW 2017).

3.3 Observations and significant learnings

On the Study Tour we met with clients, frontline workers, advocates and policy-makers involved in the homelessness sector in Canada. Although our time in Canada was short, these visits allowed us to glean valuable insights into the country's complex homelessness structures and systems.

There are significant differences in the prevalence of homelessness in Vancouver, Calgary, Ottawa and Toronto—furthermore, our observations of each city's homelessness did not always match with the available statistics. For example, in Vancouver's east side we observed a significant concentration of homeless people;

⁴ Disability homelessness data is not collected via COH point-in-time surveys.

however, on a per capita basis Calgary has the most homelessness of the four cities, with Metro Vancouver the least. Between 2008 and 2014 Calgary saw a 62 per cent drop in street homelessness, Metro Vancouver a 39 per cent decrease, and Toronto a 24 per cent increase. While Calgary and Toronto experienced increases in Indigenous homelessness, Vancouver saw a 15 per cent decrease (Doberstein 2017).

The governance structures of each city also vary—that is, how the sector players organise and collaborate to make decisions about system and program design, funding allocation and service gap analysis. In his 2017 book on homelessness governance, Carey Doberstein compares the structures and collaborative mechanisms of Vancouver, Calgary and Toronto during the period 1995–2015. Vancouver and Calgary have community advisory bodies that meet regularly, where members discuss and provide advice in relation to the disbursement of homelessness funding from federal and provincial governments. During the two decades considered, Toronto only had one advisory body, which didn't meet frequently and had a narrow focus on municipal funding. Doberstein argues that each city's homelessness outcomes are greatly impacted by how well the various actors in the society work together (i.e. all levels of government; private business; community, not-for-profit and faith-based organisations; frontline services; policy-makers; and advocates) to end homelessness.

With that in mind, some reoccurring themes emerged during the Study Tour:

- frontline programs that integrate human services delivery achieve better outcomes
- flexible funding arrangements facilitate innovative programs that can better address local need
- where all parts of the system can work together, with clear outcomes, targets and a flexible approach, homelessness will fall.

These themes and other insights are discussed below, drawing on observations and conversations from site visits and meetings, and focussing on some of the most successful homelessness initiatives.

3.3.1 Calgary Homeless Foundation

The Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF) is a not-for-profit organisation led by a volunteer board of directors with experience across a broad range of sectors. The foundation was established in 1998 to unify efforts to end homelessness through the strategic and focussed management of local resources. The CHF sees its role as 'the System Planner of Calgary's homeless-serving system-of-care', working in partnership with specialist homelessness service providers, the private sector, government, local communities, faith-based community organisations, foundations and the general public to end homelessness (CHF 2019).

In 2008, Calgary became the first Canadian city to develop a 10-year plan to end homelessness and the CHF was given the mandate to implement the plan. In 2009 the CHF became a community entity for federal distribution of program funding, and was also appointed to lead program funding stewardship for the provincial government. The CHF funds 23 agencies operating 57 programs. Its role includes monitoring program performance and comparing programs to reduce duplication and leverage resources more effectively (CHF 2018). The Alex housing program (discussed below) is funded and monitored through the CHF.

When asked to reflect on Calgary's bold 10-year plan, frontline workers expressed regret that national housing policies had throttled the success of the strategy. For example, Housing First policy settings (implemented via the HPS) had led to the

disenfranchisement of shelter providers and a disconnect between the various services in the homelessness sector. Staff noted that emergency shelters should be a pathway into Housing First programs, but instead they had become a barrier to entry—under the HPS, clients in a shelter were considered ‘housed’ and therefore did not meet the chronicity threshold to qualify for Housing First programs. This has led to an extraordinary situation in which clients have (anecdotally) been living for years in a 2,000-bed Calgary homelessness shelter. Some of the workers described it as ‘warehousing homelessness’.

Stakeholders in other cities also raised issues with the Housing First model, pointing out that without support and service coordination from the health system, in particular regarding mental health, the approach doesn’t work. Funding, some argued, should be allocated to patients, not regions (Hugh Lawson, TCH). The sentiment towards Housing First across the country was summed up by Marc Maracle from Gignul Non-Profit Housing Corporation in Ottawa, who lamented, ‘housing first but not people second’. It seems the federal government has listened to sector feedback and, as such, is taking a more flexible approach with its new federal homelessness strategy.

There seems to be some ambivalence around the fact that, 10 years on, homelessness in Calgary has not ended, but rather has slowed significantly in the face of rapid population growth. CEO of the CHF, Diana Krecsy, wrote in the 2018 annual report, ‘Our journey of the past 20 years has been a series of learnings, failing forward and successes, over and over again, that have led us to this place where we’ve housed over 9,300 people’ (CHF 2018). The 2018 Point-In-Time Homeless Count for Calgary shows that there are still 2,911 people experiencing homelessness in the city. However, this is a decrease of 311 from the 2016 count (CHF 2019) and for this the CHF is to be applauded.

3.3.2 The Alex

The Alex is a community organisation that delivers innovative and accessible health and social solutions. The organisation’s philosophy is that whole health cannot be enjoyed when we are hungry, in chronic pain, disconnected from the community, living in poverty, or if we don’t have a roof over our head. The Alex thus delivers a range of integrated services for Calgarians, including:

- a full-service health clinic for low-income earners
- a community health bus that visits shelters and other support agencies
- a community centre that runs health-focussed drop-in programs
- a youth health centre offering a safe and supportive place for young people from 12pm to midnight
- a youth health bus that visits high schools, offering medical and social support
- a youth law service that provides free legal information
- a seniors’ health centre
- a community food centre that provides healthy meals, affordable produce and cooking lessons
- a dental health bus that provides free dental care to low-income children and youth
- housing programs for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.

The Alex has four housing programs (providing 430 tenancies) to help individuals experiencing homelessness: Homebase, Pathways to Housing, Prelude and Abbeydale Place. Homebase serves the most vulnerable clients, providing intensive support and wrap-around services. Pathways specifically targets homeless individuals who are affected by mental illness or have problems with the justice system—it offers an integrated approach, with clients supported by a team of health and justice professionals (The Alex c.2018). In order to attract funding under the now-defunct national HPS (replaced by Reaching Home), these programs had to follow the Housing First model—that is, giving clients a home first and then providing health and social services (The Alex c.2019).

The housing programs have achieved good outcomes, and thus far no major changes have been made under the new NHS. Pathways to Housing has a retention rate over 85 per cent, and clients show reduced use of emergency medical services and fewer interactions with the justice system. Meanwhile, 63 per cent of Abbeydale clients report abusing substances less frequently after 12 months participation in the program (The Alex c.2019).

A study looking into patterns of exits from Calgary's Housing First programs found that families graduate from programs more quickly than single adults without dependents, and that having a history of addictions does not appear to affect a client's graduation rate (Jadidzadeh and Falvo 2018). Some cohorts move on more quickly from Housing First programs than others, and factors such as source of income can accelerate departure (Jadidzadeh and Falvo 2018).

The Alex's Housing First strategy does not mean evictions don't occur—there is a strong policy position that tenants experience the consequences of their choices. However, while evictions do happen, connections are maintained in an effort to help clients understand why they were evicted and the behaviour change needed to maintain a future tenancy.

The Alex Community Food Centre is located in an old restaurant and the atmosphere is warm and social—on the day we visit, the smell of cinnamon porridge permeates a scene brimming with positive human connections. Testament to The Alex's holistic, wrap-around approach to the delivery of services—where the case manager knows all the available resources and develops a plan that is intensively managed—each of the four housing programs is intimately connected to the food centre.

The holistic approach is led from the top, by a board of directors that oversees all the organisation's services. The board has pushed hard for the integration of federally and locally funded services; however, certain frustrations remain. For example, the need for clients to meet a certain chronicity level (i.e. be extremely sick or in significant crisis) to be eligible for the federally funded Housing First programs (Steve Alex, Housing Program Manager). Though service integration is not a priority consideration at the national level, The Alex board understands the critical connection between health and housing, and is committed to delivering whole-life outcomes.⁵

⁵ The organisation's programs are monitored by the CHF, and workers at The Alex described their frustration that health outcomes of clients is not a factor considered in reviews of the program.

3.3.3 The Oaks

The Oaks in Ottawa delivers an innovative residential managed alcohol program (MAP)⁶ for homeless clients. A converted hotel houses up to 61 residents (men and women, many of whom are artists). Like The Alex Community Food Centre, The Oaks has a strong community atmosphere and residents seem content and grateful. The program requires minimal security and residents can choose to leave at any time. One resident commented that he is happy to be, 'off the streets, out of trouble, out of the cells'.

The Oaks brings together housing, health and psychological services to provide solutions for homeless people with chronic alcohol addiction. The services are integrated, with three different organisations working together to deliver outcomes. While the program receives some government funding, it relies heavily on donations and volunteers.

The program's positive results have gained it support from leading health professionals at The Ottawa Hospital. Staff at The Oaks report that clients experience improvements in mental health, as well as reduced interaction with the police, justice and health systems. Importantly, residents are safe, they reduce their intake of alcohol, and they have a dignified life.

Residential MAPs have been delivered in the United Kingdom and Canada for many years, but as yet there are none in Australia. However, there is plenty of interest in the notion. In 2015 the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education funded a study into the feasibility of a MAP for Sydney's homeless (Ezard, Dolan et al. 2015). Describing a MAP as a 'novel' approach, the study found strong evidence that a MAP could considerably reduce service utilisation for this cohort and also improve life outcomes. In addition, the study found that clients may prefer a residential facility to a day facility. The Shepherds of Good Hope, which runs The Oaks, offers a combination of residential and day programs, so that services can be tailored to clients' needs.

The Australian Capital Territory has recently undertaken a study considering homeless people with high and complex service needs, to determine what services and accommodation are required for this cohort. The evidence suggests that housing and support programs such as those run by The Alex and The Oaks would certainly help meet the needs of these people.

3.3.4 Lu'ma Native Housing Society

The primary purpose of the Lu'ma Native Housing Society (Lu'ma) is to provide affordable housing for Indigenous peoples in Canada. Over time, the society realised that a broad range of services—not just housing—were needed to improve the social determinants of health.⁷ As such, Lu'ma has grown its services to now provide a medical centre; a patients' lodge; a children's village; and youth mentorship and housing programs.

Lu'ma Aboriginal Children's Village in Vancouver is a highly unique and innovative program that aims to prevent homelessness as youth transition from foster care to adulthood. In addition to providing stability for this highly at-risk cohort, the program

⁶ MAPs are harm-reduction programs designed to help chronic alcoholics to manage their addiction and involves providing regular, medically regulated, doses of alcohol.

⁷ The World Health Organization defines the social determinants of health as 'the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life' (see www.who.int/social_determinants/en/).

provides a platform for individual success. As testament to this, 50 per cent of the youths who were part of the inaugural program intake will be going to college (BC Housing Research Centre 2018).

Lu'ma is also the community entity for the British Columbia region that administers Housing First funding on behalf of the Canadian government—specifically to urban Aboriginal organisations that service the needs of the Indigenous homeless community (Lu'ma Native Housing Society 2019).

While The Alex in Calgary was originally a health provider and Lu'ma was originally a housing provider, both organisations have recognised that integrated services are needed to achieve outcomes for clients.

3.3.5 Employment and Social Development Canada

In June 2018 the Government of Canada announced Reaching Home, a redesigned federal homelessness program that replaced the HPS in April 2019. Reaching Home is a key plank of the NHS, with a target of reducing chronic homelessness by 50 per cent by 2027/28.

Staff at the Department of Employment and Social Development noted that Reaching Home was still in development, but that highlights of the program would include:

- more flexibility for communities under an outcomes-based approach
- a shift toward a more coordinated and systems-based approach to addressing homelessness
- an expansion of reach, with the program available to more communities
- an increase in funding for Indigenous homelessness, to address over-representation of that cohort
- a new funding system to address homelessness in the territories.

Federal government funding will not go to the provinces or territories, but rather to specific cities, municipalities and not-for-profit funding bodies (e.g. the CHF). As in Australia, where the states and territories are the largest funders of homelessness programs, in Canada the provinces and territories provide most funding (Doberstein, personal communication). At the time of writing, 61 communities are funded under the HPS. The new program will seek to expand this number and shift away from Housing First targets to a coordinated access model in an effort to ameliorate the fragmented systems driven by the current funding model, particularly in relation to early intervention and prevention programs. The new program seeks to provide flexibility, to ensure people do not miss out on services because their chronicity rating or length of homelessness do not meet program requirements. Funded communities will be asked to design and deliver programs using an outcomes-based approach.

Department staff spoke about the structural drivers of homelessness, focussing in particular on how critical the design of funding programs and incentives is to achieving positive outcomes—and how poorly targeted incentives and funding models inevitably leading to unintended consequences. There is hope that Reaching Home will provide appropriately targeted yet flexible funding arrangements that will drive positive outcomes across the systems and lead to reductions in homelessness.

3.4 Applications for Australia

Canada's cuts in funding and shift in responsibility for housing from federal to provincial and municipal governments in the mid-1990s resulted in ill-prepared governments not being able to deliver on housing solutions (Richter, Burns et al. 2011). This is not dissimilar to the experiences of many other countries. In Canada, and internationally, the belief that cities can end homelessness with a plan and a can-do attitude is waning. 'Indeed, for some observers, 10-year plans, while well-intentioned, lacked the necessary support from senior orders of government to be successful' (Falvo 2017).

Our conversations with homelessness sector representatives during the Study Tour revealed several important learnings gained over the last two decades, including:

- the need for collaboration across all sections of community and government
- no single program or policy setting is a pancea
- many players hold different pieces of the puzzle
- ending homelessness is an ongoing journey.

Those cities that have come together to solve homelessness have seen the most improvement.

In Vancouver and Calgary, where governance networks include affordable-housing providers, mental health and addiction professionals, Aboriginal community members, representatives of drop-in centres, and others with lived experience, homelessness is on the decline. In Toronto, where government-level decision-making was closed to civil-society actors during the period of investigation, homelessness levels remained stagnant' (Doberstein 2017).

To ensure the best outcomes, there is a need for genuine collaboration on design of public policies and funding models. Human services delivery must break out of its silos and become integrated if we are to reduce homelessness. It is important to have choice, diversity and an integrated, adaptive and dynamic sector that can respond to changing needs. Canada's experience should serve as a warning against implementing an inflexible Housing First approach. One size does not fit all, and the focus must remain on outcomes rather than prescriptive programs.

In summary, there are three key lessons for Australia:

- frontline programs that integrate human services delivery achieve better outcomes
- flexible funding arrangements facilitate innovative programs that can better address local need
- where all parts of the system can work together, with clear outcomes, targets and a flexible approach, homelessness will fall.

4 Social and affordable housing

Mychelle Curran

4.1 Introduction

The current social and affordable housing settings in Canada are—unsurprisingly, and consistent with many other countries—reflective of government decisions regarding accountability, responsibility and, importantly, funding. Greg Suttor (2016: 1) describes the social housing system in Canada today as, ‘essentially the product of three elements in policy history: the legacy of 1965–1995 programs in terms of funding, housing stock and policy history; devolution and retrenchment in the 1990s, and modest post-2011 reengagement’. (Appendix 2 provides a summary of Suttor’s analysis of key features of major Canadian social housing programs from 1949 onwards.)

Policy research consultant Steve Pomeroy summarised the evolution of roles and responsibilities for Canadian social and affordable housing in a presentation to the study group (see Table 1).

Table 1: Social and affordable housing roles and responsibility, 1949–present

Years	Roles and responsibility
1949–73	Joint federal and provincial governments, with federal government as the lead
1973–85	Unilateral federal government
1985–94	Provincial and territorial government engagement and maturing process—minimal role of municipal governments (municipal non-profits as emerging form of public housing)
1993	Termination of funding for new social housing by federal government (ongoing subsidies preserved)
1994–2001	Commencement of administrative transfers to provinces/territories (still incomplete: Quebec and Prince Edward Island not signed up) Preservation of ongoing subsidies, without indexation Increased future liabilities for provinces as agreements expire: underfunded capital replacement; interest rate and inflation risk Ontario ‘double devolution’ as province devolves roles and responsibilities to 47 municipal services
2002–17	Re-entry of federal government to funding new housing Mixed federal, provincial and municipal partnership models Capital grants rather than operating subsidies
2018–	National Housing Strategy: mixed federal, provincial and municipal partnerships

Source: Adapted from Pomeroy (2018: Slides 16 and 17).

The period from the early 1970s saw growth of social housing in Canada. Between 1974 and 1986, there was a shift to funding non-profit groups such as churches, co-

operatives and municipalities in order to provide affordable housing (McAfee 2015). More than 220,000 units of non-profit and co-operative housing were provided during that time for low- and moderate-income households. Funding of these programs began as 100 per cent loans through CMHC, but this changed over time. By 1979, CMHC was providing subsidies to cover project costs and reduced rents, with housing providers borrowing from market lenders. This contrasts with Australia, where capital investment was still, at that time, largely focussed on large state housing agencies, with only small growth in community housing and local council programs (funded through partial capital grants for projects, often in regional areas and often targeted at older or specific tenant cohorts, where partners brought the balance of funding and/or resources, such as land contributions).

In 1973, a rent supplement program was implemented in Canada, which provided financial assistance to low-income renters (living in either non-profit or some identified private dwellings), reducing their rent to a level considered affordable for their income (a 'rent-geared-to-income' approach).

In the mid-1980s, the federal non-profit housing program started targeting households in core housing need, with operating subsidies being made available to non-profits to bridge the full difference between cost of operation and rent revenue for a period of up to 35 years. The expiry of this policy means that in the future we are likely to see increasingly rapid deterioration and/or loss of stock (similar to the Australian experience, where revenue from sale of dwellings has underpinned operational funding shortfalls for planned, capital maintenance and renewal programs).

Up until the 1990s, Canada's federal government, through CMHC, maintained administrative and funding responsibility for social housing and provided funding to provinces and territories, with overarching program agreements that determined shared cost arrangements. From 1993, the federal government terminated funding for new social and affordable housing and transferred responsibility almost wholly to the provinces and territories.

Over the course of the mid-to-late 1990s, most provinces and territories became responsible for making decisions regarding the administration, design and funding of housing programs (Leone and Carroll 2010), under the auspice of a federal-provincial Social Housing Agreement (SHA). The federal government retained responsibility for managing existing agreements with co-operative housing providers in several provinces, as well as for developing and managing housing for Aboriginal people living on-reserve.⁸

There is currently no single standard system of social and affordable housing in Canada, with varied levels of provincial and territorial funding engagement for provision of housing and resource contributions to these sectors. This is also true in Australia, where states and territories make key decisions about the administration, design and funding of housing programs and services in their own jurisdictions. However, in Australia the role of national housing agreements, underpinned by previous ministerial advisory councils and now by the Housing and Homelessness Senior Officials' Network (HHSO), means that there is some consistency in core public/social housing program offerings—albeit not at an operational policy level, where states and territories have designed their own eligibility and access parameters.

⁸ In Canada, 'Indian reserves' or 'First Nations reserves' are tracts of land legally set aside for a particular Indigenous 'band' (i.e. a First Nations government). Around half of 'status Indians' in Canada live on-reserve. (Note: the term 'Indian' is generally only used in the legal context of the Indian Act, as it is considered outdated and offensive by some.)

Adding a further degree of confusion, the Canadian federal government introduced the Affordable Housing Initiative (AHI) in 2001 to establish new affordable housing. The main difference between this program and previous iterations is that there were no ongoing subsidies for housing delivered under this scheme. The federal government renewed funding for this initiative for five years, from 2013–17, under the IAH program, with provinces and territories responsible for making decisions on how to spend that funding. Funding can be used for a range of purposes, including building new affordable housing units or renovating existing ones, as well as home ownership assistance, rent supplements, shelter allowances, and renovation or repair of accommodation for victims of family violence.

In 2018, the Canadian federal government announced its 10-year, \$40 billion NHS: A Place to Call Home. There has been considerable debate about the level of ‘new’ funding allocated to the strategy, given some program funding was announced in the 2016 and 2017 budgets and is on-going, while other funding represents a reinvestment of savings due to the upcoming expiry of the operating subsidies scheme (Pomeroy 2017). Additionally, given the level of new investment is only around \$11.2 billion over 10 years, the strategy’s targets are very ambitious.

The NHS website touts that:

The federal government is re-engaging in affordable housing through the National Housing Strategy. It provides a platform for the public, private and non-profit sectors to come together. Their collaborative efforts will provide more Canadians with a place to call home. (NHS c.2018)

The strategy aims to lift 530,000 Canadian families out of housing need. It will provide funding to help provinces and territories protect or renew existing social housing and build new housing, as well as make surplus federal land available to non-profits and other affordable housing providers at little or no cost, to create more affordable homes and encourage the development of sustainable, mixed-use and mixed-income communities (ESDC 2018: 12). Importantly, the strategy will support Canadians to access opportunities to achieve improved education, economic, health, safety and wellbeing outcomes, with housing that is located in proximity to key services and infrastructure.

The NHS introduces the Canada Housing Benefit scheme, commencing from 2020, which will provide around \$2,500 in annual financial assistance to approximately 300,000 households who are living in social housing, on the wait list or living in identified private housing. Further, the strategy commits \$2.1 billion, over nine years, to its redesigned federal homelessness program, Reaching Home, which aims to reduce chronic homelessness in Canada by 50 per cent over 10 years.

Integral to the new NHS is a commitment to a rights-based approach—that is, that access to safe and affordable housing is a universal right. Furthermore, NHS legislation requires federal government to maintain a national housing strategy and to report to parliament on targets and outcomes. In addition, a newly established Federal Housing Advocate will make solution-based recommendations to CMHC and the Minister for Housing (ESDC 2018).

The AHURI Study Tour provided an opportunity for participants to observe and meet with key players involved in the funding, administration, governance and delivery of Canada’s social and affordable housing programs in three provinces: British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario. (Appendix 3 provides a brief summary of social and affordable housing arrangements in each of these provinces.) Site visits were undertaken with the following organisations and programs.

→ British Columbia: Vancouver

- British Columbia Housing Management Commission (BC Housing)
 - Co-operative Housing Federation of BC
 - BC Non-Profit Housing Association
 - Aboriginal Housing Management Association
 - Lu'ma Native Housing Society
 - Affordable housing sites in Vancouver city area
- Alberta: Calgary
- Community Housing Affordability Collective
 - Horizon Housing Society
- Ontario: Ottawa/Toronto
- Canadian Housing and Renewal Association—Indigenous Caucus (Ottawa)
 - Gignul Non-Profit Housing Corporation (Ottawa)
 - Toronto Community Housing

This chapter provides a summary of Canada's current social and affordable housing settings, and describes various elements of the Canadian system observed during the AHURI Study Tour. The discussion here does not focus on housing for Indigenous populations living on reserves, but includes some examples of good governance and practice in respect to Indigenous social housing programs in metropolitan areas. (Governance, funding, roles and responsibilities for First Nations housing across Canada is explored in more detail in Chapter 5.)

4.2 Definitions and statistics

In Canada, *social housing* is generally defined as housing subsidised by governments (often developed in collaboration with the private and/or public not-for-profit sector) that is made available to those who would otherwise be unable to afford to live in suitable and adequate housing in the private market. The terms *public*, *community* and *non-market housing* are used interchangeably 'to describe housing for people whose needs for adequate and affordable shelter cannot be met through market housing' (McAfee 2015).

Affordable housing, on the other hand, generally does not have ongoing operating costs covered by government; instead, housing is subsidised so tenants pay only 80 per cent of the market rent.⁹ As in Australia, affordable housing, without financial subsidies, does not typically serve households with very low incomes.

Of the approximately 14 million dwellings in Canada, social and affordable housing currently represents around 5 per cent. However, it is difficult to accurately quantify the size and scale of, and investment in, the sector across Canada. Devolution from the federal government means that provinces and territories have developed, delivered and funded new programs through a variety of different service models and delivery

⁹ For the purpose of the chapter, this narrow definition is used. However, it should be noted that in Canada and internationally, *affordable housing* is commonly used to describe 'any housing that costs less than 30% of a household's before-tax income'. For more detail see <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/developing-and-renovating/develop-new-affordable-housing/programs-and-information/about-affordable-housing-in-canada>.

organisations (which may, in turn, have funded or procured additional housing). There is no national requirement for provinces and territories to report to the public in a standardised way and therefore the Canadian Housing Statistics (by Statistics Canada) count only households assisted through existing agreements.

As for many other countries, and evidenced by NHS targets, demand and need for social and affordable housing in Canada far outstrips the current supply of dwellings acquired and specifically held for that purpose. Analysis of 2016 Canadian Census data on housing and incomes identified a substantial shortfall of lower-rent units, with around 930,000 low-income renter households and only 570,000 affordable¹⁰ rental units available (Pomeroy 2016). AHURI research from the same year indicated that in Canada there were around 560,000 units of social housing co-funded by federal and provincial governments under operating agreements, plus a further 140,000 dwellings funded under unilateral provincial programs or post-1990s 'affordable housing' initiatives (Lawson, Legacy et al. 2016).

4.3 Observations and significant learnings

As noted earlier in the paper, there is no one standard system for social and affordable housing within Canada. This was evident in our visits and discussions with various stakeholders in Vancouver, Calgary, Ottawa and Toronto.

Demand and need for social and supportive housing was particularly, and visibly, evident in the prevalence of rough sleepers in Vancouver, Toronto and parts of Ottawa. Whilst rough sleeping was not visibly evident in Calgary (with the temperature below zero at the time of our visit), the presence of a 2,000-bed homeless shelter, operating at capacity, clearly points to a need for increased social and supportive housing.

Observations and learnings from our site visits and meetings with key stakeholders are described below. Given the breadth of topics covered and the limited time available on the tour, these insights represent only a glimpse into the complexities of the Canadian housing system.

4.3.1 BC Housing

Funding for BC Housing has increased by nearly \$500 million between 2018 and 2019, to around \$1.3 billion, with most of the additional funding being directed to new construction and addressing the backlog of social housing repairs and maintenance.

Currently, BC Housing directly manages around 7,000 social housing dwellings, with the not-for-profit sector managing around 68,000 dwellings. Representatives of the organisation report that British Columbia has the 'healthiest' not-for-profit sector in the country.

BC Housing has a range of new programs and initiatives currently under development or being delivered, including:

- soliciting proposals from not-for-profit providers to operate supportive housing for homeless people, as well as to provide new housing for families, seniors, and people escaping domestic and family violence
- providing funding for new modular housing (permanent and temporary), including rapid-response dwellings (generally multi-storey with commercial kitchens).

¹⁰ Affordable at the 30% benchmark—that is, with rents less than 30% of a household's before-tax income.

BC Housing is also *National Housing Act* lender with a \$2.4 billion mortgage portfolio.

Through its Community Partnerships and Initiatives (CPI) program, BC Housing has been able to provide loan funding (through a regulated framework) to not-for-profit organisations, and to private organisations on the condition that they must be delivering affordable housing. The organisation reports that 95 per cent of funding packages go to not-for-profits. Funding is not provided for the whole project, rather BC Housing assists organisations to access market funding to support the project. Currently, there are around 300 projects at different stages under this program.

A newer part of BC Housing's business is its Supportive Housing program, which incorporates the management of 1,987 shelter spaces operated by not-for-profit organisations, as well as elements of outreach and prevention, and supportive housing (e.g. women's transition accommodation and other supports for people escaping domestic and family violence). BC Housing also funds a range of homelessness outreach programs, homelessness prevention programs and emergency shelters.

Staff described a Coordinated Access and Assessment (CAA) approach, which provides a direct pathway into housing and eliminates the need for clients to be on multiple wait lists. The CAA is linked to around 2,000 supportive housing units in downtown Vancouver. It was noted that there is a need to maintain a 'healthy' community within these facilities and, therefore, only a percentage of allocations are to people with high needs.

Between 2007 and 2011, BC Housing purchased and renovated 13 aging single-room occupancy (SRO) buildings, in order to preserve affordable housing in the City of Vancouver for its most vulnerable citizens (see Photo 2). The buildings are managed by not-for-profit organisations under 15-year agreements, with BC Housing responsible for providing building lifecycle and facility maintenance services.

According to BC Housing (c.2018), the SRO project delivered:

- long-term supportive housing and improved quality of life for residents
- updated amenities, such as cooking and bathroom facilities, heating and hot water.
- improved building safety
- restoration of appearance and heritage value of the buildings.

Despite the improvements to the appearance and living conditions in these buildings, service providers we spoke with reported that clients are subject to extremely high levels of antisocial behaviour, with some people preferring to live on the streets rather than in an SRO.

Photo 2: SRO building in downtown Vancouver



A unique aspect of housing in British Columbia is that some municipal governments have 'rental zones' designated just for the provision of rental housing. BC Housing staff reported that such inclusionary zoning, as in Australia, is generally haphazard. However, they also highlighted that the City of Vancouver is visionary and highly committed to the provision of social and affordable housing. It has a 10-year housing strategy, with targets for building more affordable housing, protecting and renewing existing affordable rental housing, and providing housing and support for the city's most vulnerable residents. Additionally, the municipality stipulates that for any large-scale redevelopments (brownfield and greenfield), 20 per cent must be allocated to affordable housing. Generally, in the case of private developments, a piece of land is carved out of the development and purchased by the provincial government for provision of non-market housing.

Examples of the city's commitment to housing include its willingness to work with government (which sets aside 'meanwhile use' land—i.e. land required for another purpose in the future), and to support streamlined planning approvals for the provision of temporary modular housing. Partnering with BC Housing and not-for-profit organisations, as at October 2018 over 550 temporary modular units had been completed and tenanted, with a further 50 under construction.

Larwill Place

The temporary modular housing at Larwill Place (Photo 3) comprises 98 studio homes, 12 of which are wheelchair accessible.

Aneki Housing

This temporary modular housing (Photo 4) provides 39 studio dwellings, for women only.

220 Terminal Avenue

The Vancouver Affordable Housing Agency (VAHA) opened this temporary modular housing building in 2017, with funding provided by the federal government and Vancity.¹¹ It was the first facility of the kind to be built on city-owned land.

The 220 building (Photo 5) comprises 40 social housing units, including four suites that can accommodate people with disabilities. It differs from other temporary modular housing in Vancouver, as it is not supportive housing.

Photo 3: Temporary modular housing at Larwill Place



Photo 4: Temporary modular housing at Aneki Housing for Women



¹¹ Vancouver City Savings Credit Union

Photo 5: Temporary modular housing at 220 Terminal Avenue



4.3.2 BC Non-Profit Housing Association and the Co-operative Housing Federation of BC

Across British Columbia, there are around 60,000 social and affordable housing dwellings managed by 700–800 not-for-profit providers. This includes around 14,000 co-operative housing units managed through approximately 250 co-operative associations. There are 40 Indigenous community housing organisations across the province, all of which are members of the BC Non-Profit Housing Association (BCNPHA).

Both BCNPHA and the Co-operative Housing Federation of BC (CHFBC) are member-based, representing their respective sectors and providing research, training, capability and capacity-building services to member organisations. The CHFBC also assists their members with funding investment plans, creating resource plans for asset management, financing repairs (with preferential borrowing rates). It also owns a property management company which services just over 6,000 dwellings.

Representatives we met with reported that two-thirds of the not-for-profit sector operate just one social housing building with less than 50 dwellings. They also noted that, in the sector, there are many 'low-risk' multi-family dwellings.

Both organisations provide asset management services to members, to provide efficiencies to small and unskilled organisations. For example, they deliver bulk purchasing programs for not-for-profit organisations, for items such as telecom services, energy efficiency programs, cleaning contracts, insurance, engineering services (to undertake building condition assessments), large appliances, flooring and kitchen units.

BCNPHA staff indicated that member fees only make up 9–10 per cent of their budget, with fees for bulk purchasing programs providing an important source of funding. Additionally, the organisation holds shares in a long-term reserve fund, as part of a mandate that all not-for-profit organisations in British Columbia set aside funding for capital reserves through a mutual investment fund run by BC Housing. Currently, BCNPHA has \$515 million in assets under management of the fund.

The CHFBC holds around \$6 million in deposits from housing co-operatives, for programs to deliver bulk purchasing schemes. Ninety-four per cent of co-operatives are members of the organisation, and they pay \$4 per week per dwelling that they own as their membership fee.

Co-op tenants currently have long-term tenure, providing they meet their lease obligations. Government is considering changing this policy so that tenants are moved on if their income improves. Representatives of BCNPHA and CHFBC stated that it may be appropriate to impose such a policy on housing developed under new funding, but not to apply it retrospectively, as it would impact the existing rent revenue of non-profits and co-ops. Further, CHFBC would support implementation of such downsizing requirements only on the condition that tenants can remain part of the community for as long as they choose.

BCNPHA and CHFBC have joined together to establish Housing Central, which enables them to leverage their respective skills. The partnership also helps governments to view not-for-profit providers as a more 'joined up' community housing sector.

Senior representatives of the two organisations provided their perspectives on the federal government's new NHS. Some of their comments are provided here.

It is good that the federal government is back in this space and there is real investment.

It should have addressed the whole housing system [continuum].

There remains a lack of coordination between federal, provincial/territory and municipal levels of government, with all terms of funding and conditions determined at each level.

An investment vehicle was desirable, rather than the current approach of funding rounds through BC Housing.

They also provided views on issues with existing funding models.

Operating subsidies are not designed to enable innovation and creativity.

There's too much focus on contract and reporting.

Organisations that run at a deficit are topped up, whilst organisations that make a profit have to pay it back to government rather than invest it into new or innovative housing delivery/models.

4.3.3 First Nations housing providers and member associations

Study Tour participants met with representatives from a number of First Nations housing providers and member associations, including the Aboriginal Housing Management Association and Lu'ma Native Housing Society (both in Vancouver). In Ottawa, the group met with senior Indigenous people from the CHRA Indigenous Caucus and Gignul Non-Profit Housing Corporation.

These meetings were inspiring, and members of the study group were impressed by the approaches to governance and the professionalism of the sector, as well as the commitment to ensuring that Indigenous people in Canada have the opportunity to achieve strong social, educational, health, wellbeing and economic outcomes. (Chapter 5 discusses Indigenous housing in detail.)

4.3.4 Horizon Housing Society and Community Housing Affordability Collective

In 1976, leaders of the Calgary division of the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) recognised a need for innovative housing for their clients, and so created the Hari Housing Society, later to become Horizon Housing. The group's ambition was to provide vulnerable Calgarians with affordable housing that would blend in with the surrounding community.

Horizon aims as to ensure families and individuals have the support they need to be successful in making their homes now and in the future, and the organisation collaborates with over 20 support agencies. Horizon owns and operates 742 units across eight apartment buildings throughout Calgary, as well as eight supported group homes. It utilises a mixed-income, mixed-use approach to help reduce stigma, promote community integration and enhance quality of life for residents (Horizon Housing Society c.2018).

The CEO of Horizon also currently serves as Co-Chair of the Community Housing Affordability Collective (CHAC), which describes itself as 'the collective engine for improving housing affordability in Calgary through cross-sector collaboration and community-based advocacy' (CHAC c.2017).

CHAC is guided by its collectively developed action plan, which aims to achieve the following three broad outcomes.

- Integrated approach to housing:
 - creating a consistent, centralised housing intake process that is coordinated across providers
 - establishing a common voice to engage proactively with all levels of government and the general public
- Stable and diverse housing mix:
 - ensuring that residents are appropriately housed and can access the full range of housing options that meet their needs
 - developing a joint real estate strategy across providers to ensure a stable and adequate non-market housing supply
- Predictable and sustainable funding:
 - developing or modifying financial processes and tools to increase housing affordability (CHAC 2016).

Calgary only has around 17,000 affordable rental dwellings across the province, which is well below the national average. CHAC members consider that Calgary needs to develop and implement new and innovative financial strategies (such as those in place elsewhere in Canada), and that non-market housing providers should be able to access new financial products, and sustainable and diverse funding, to reduce reliance on direct public subsidy and better enable not-for-profits to meet their organisational goals for preservation of existing stock.

4.3.5 Toronto Community Housing

Organisational background

TCH was created in 2002 via the amalgamation of the Metropolitan Toronto Housing Corporation and the Toronto Housing Company. The City of Toronto is the sole shareholder, as mandated by Ontario's *Housing Services Act*, and a Shareholder Direction statement outlines the fundamental principles that govern the business (City of Toronto 2013). TCH is run by a 12-member board of directors, appointed by the City and made up of the mayor, city councillors, citizens and TCH residents. The board oversees the management of TCH and monitors its performance against its strategic plan.

TCH's \$9 billion in public assets is spread over 2,100 buildings around Toronto. It provides homes to nearly 60,000 low- and moderate-income households, representing around 110,000 individuals—roughly 4 per cent of Toronto's population. The majority of TCH's operating revenue comes from tenant rents (55%), with subsidies from the City of Toronto making up 39 per cent (TCH c.2019).

Similar to Australian social housing systems, by far the majority of TCH's tenants pay subsidised rents (rent-geared-to-income or RGI), with RGI rents generally set at 30 per cent of gross income. However, in contrast to Australia's growing seniors social housing population, TCH reports that only 25 per cent of its residents are aged over 59 (TCH c.2019).

TCH is the main developer for six community revitalisation projects, which are managed by a number of subsidiaries. Altogether the ventures will provide 4,500 new or renovated rental units, along with 12,500 new market-rate condominiums.

Current context

TCH's Director of Strategic Planning and Stakeholder Relations provided a detailed briefing on the current context of the organisation.

Firstly, TCH has a relatively new CEO, who is driving new directions. This includes implementing a new strategic plan, with a focus on improved tenant experiences, better buildings and greater communities. New information technology systems are also being considered.

At the same time, the City of Toronto is proposing to withdraw management of scattered low-rise housing from TCH and allocate it to another provider, which could wipe \$40 million off the value of the portfolio.

The majority of TCH dwellings are in high-rise buildings, including 25 per cent studio apartments and 30 per cent one-bedroom apartments. So-called 'bachelor housing' (allocated to single men, often recently released from prison) serves a cohort of clients with complex needs and multiple risk factors. The organisation is experiencing increasing demand for single-person dwellings, as well as for 5- and 6-bedroom dwellings for larger families (these are generally provided in low-rise developments).

Allocations to vacant housing are through a centralised waiting list managed by the City. One in seven allocations are from the 'disadvantaged' list, which includes: 16–17-year-olds, the terminally ill, people experiencing homelessness, and families reuniting. The City is currently considering the option of a choice-based letting scheme, under which people in need of housing would be able to see all the vacancies available in an area—a system which advocates claim engenders transparency and accountability.

At the time of our visit, TCH was in its fourth year of a 10-year, \$2.6 billion capital repair plan, with funding provided by the City—a strategy that was prompted by the dire state

of existing stock and which followed TCH's startling decision to close an entire high-rise apartment building due to poor condition

There are no concierge services in TCH buildings; however, there are security cameras, and security guards walk the buildings and provide short-term responses when needed. TCH also employs 'community police' to monitor clients, who are special constables with powers of arrest and the ability to access police records. Although they have close relations with local police, they are not an enforcement unit. Rather, their role is to help connect tenants with support and services, gather intelligence and help solve problems.

As a rule, no more than 20 per cent of 'street to home' (i.e. Housing First) clients are housed in any one building, due to the complexity of those clients' needs and the need to maintain stable communities.

Despite being able to borrow funds to invest in its housing portfolio, TCH is running out of borrowing capacity. Representatives explained that the new NHS is constraining their ability to borrow, and they would have preferred that funding be made available to existing social and affordable housing providers to invest in the best way to meet local communities' needs.

Regent Park revitalisation

TCH's various revitalisation programs are largely concentrated in the downtown area of the city, mainly due to the higher value of land there and the opportunity for increased uplift. This is consistent with approaches in New South Wales, where the need to self-fund portfolio renewal means development is concentrated in high-value locations with the potential for high uplift. Downtown Toronto has the added benefit of being close to health, education, employment and support services, as well as good transport links.

Constructed soon after the end of World War II, Regent Park was the first purpose-built public housing community in Canada. Situated on a 69-acre (28-hectare) site in the eastern part of downtown Toronto, it included Regent Park North (built in 1947) and Regent Park South (built in 1954). Over 2,000 units of walk-up apartments and row houses were built for lower-income households.

TCH is currently undertaking a major revitalisation of Regent Park, which for many decades had been known for its deteriorating buildings, problematic public spaces, antisocial behaviour and concentration of disadvantaged clients. In six stages, over a period of 15–20 years, TCH plans to demolish and re-build the entire community.

Overall, the precinct will grow from its original 2,000 units to nearly 7,500 dwellings, functioning as a mixed private, social and affordable housing estate. Alongside the housing will be new commercial premises, recreational facilities, parks and other services.

Given the history and reputation of the estate, the City chose to fully fund the first stage of redevelopment, due to misgivings that the revitalised site would not be able to attract private housing investment. These doubts were proven unfounded, as the area's proximity to the city and services resulted in timely take up of all private housing, allowing the City to reinvest its profits from Stage 1 back into the project. Subsequent stages have been co-funded through partnerships and profit sharing with private developers.

Learnings from the Regent Park revitalisation are particularly pertinent for New South Wales, given the project's strong similarities to the proposed redevelopment of Waterloo Estate in the City of Sydney Local Government Area. TCH is currently undertaking a longitudinal study to investigate the effects of the Regent Park

redevelopment on the health and wellbeing of residents. Early health-impact research is indicating a modest improvement in the mental health of residents.

Photo 6: Regent Park Stage 1 development



Photo 7: Regent Park Stage 1 development



Photo 8: One of Regent Park's roof-top vegetable gardens



4.4 Applications for Australia

The withdrawal of funding and leadership by Canada's federal government and the shifting of responsibility for social housing from federal to provincial governments (and in Ontario the double shift from provincial to municipal governments) resulted in disaggregated and varied responses across the country, with limited growth in social and affordable housing. Whilst there are some examples of provincial/territorial/municipal innovation and commitment to social and affordable housing, these are few and far between. In many provinces and territories, housing is not prioritised and former housing funding has been diverted to other areas.

Disaggregation also resulted in a hugely diverse housing delivery system, made up of large numbers of small providers, with limited professionalisation of the sector. Such a system creates risk for viability, appropriate portfolio management, and tenant outcomes.

The absence of high-level policy leadership by the federal government led to a loss of accountability and a deficit of accurate data on country-wide demand for, and supply of, social and affordable housing. This is likely to have consequences for the development and delivery of the appropriate supply responses needed to achieve the ambitious targets of the new NHS.

Hulchanski (2007: 4) noted that:

Dismantling the social housing supply program also meant that provinces and municipalities had to bear the indirect [and increasing] costs of inadequate housing and homelessness. These include the costs of physical and mental health care, emergency shelters and services, and increased policing.

It is clear from the literature and from meeting with a broad range of stakeholders that, in Canada, without the leadership and financial support of the federal government,

there has been very limited investment in affordable housing in recent decades (apart from in a few exceptional places, such as Vancouver). Notwithstanding claims by some that housing is a provincial (i.e. subnational) responsibility, vastly more subsidised housing gets built when Canada's national government leads than when it does not (Falvo 2013).

The benefits of federal leadership are evidenced by the success of the country's First Nations housing schemes, for which the continued funding and leadership by the Canadian government has provided stability and the capacity for development of a strong sector that values and practices delivery of housing programs linked to broader social, health, wellbeing and economic outcomes.

In addition, learnings from Toronto's high-rise asset revitalisation programs, although not nationally applicable, may be useful in some Australian jurisdictions.

5 First Nations housing

Jamie Chalker

5.1 Introduction

One of the most striking takeaways from the Study Tour relates specifically to Canada's approach to First Nations housing and social issues, as compared with Australia's tackling of the same issues in regard to our own Indigenous population. Canada, it seems, is a number of decades ahead, having done things wrong, learned from those missteps, and then found solutions to improve. The similarities in our governments, each under the Commonwealth and comprised of several tiers, allow for comparison of the two nations' different policy and funding priorities. Also synonymous is the historic treatment of Indigenous populations, and the social disadvantage that has followed.

The opportunity to see the advancement of Indigenous community leadership and control in social housing, specifically across the urban settings of Canada, was a strong positive of the tour. However, it is evident that there is room for further growth and maturity in this space. Current initiatives, including the publication of an Indigenous homelessness strategy, are further indicators that Canada is making great advancements in this sphere, considerate of the mistakes of the past. The renewed funding approach, led by the federal government as part of the new NHS, is also refreshing. With the right guidance, and cooperation with Indigenous people and operating entities, Canada may soon realise significant improved social outcomes for these cohorts—outcomes that Australia should be equally as anxious to realise.

This chapter focusses on the experiences of (and subsequent responses to) the Indigenous peoples in Canada (inclusive of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples), as they relate to housing and homelessness, and identifies what lessons can be applied in the Australian context. As the study group was not able to visit any regional or remote Indigenous communities, the discussion centres on the urban setting.

Site visits and meetings included:

- Aboriginal Housing Management Association (Vancouver)
- Lu'ma Native Housing Society (Vancouver)
- Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society
- Gignul Non-Profit Housing Corporation (Ottawa)
- Madawan Lodge (Ottawa)
- Skwachàys Lodge (Vancouver)

The tour afforded the opportunity to see, firsthand, a number of innovative approaches that have been led by First Nations people in Canada and subsequently supported by funding at various times and by varying tiers of government across the country. The willingness of the First Nations people we were privileged to meet to share their knowledge was impressive and humbling. There was a calmness about them that told they had weathered many storms over generations but still retained strength and hope.

In addition to providing an overview of Canadian approaches to Indigenous housing, this chapter discusses the opportunities, cautions and applicability for Australia of the Canadian experience. Hopefully Australia may be able to avoid some of the failings of

Canada's various approaches to Indigenous housing, learn from their successes, and thus progress more quickly to identifying and adopting solutions that will improve the quality of life and opportunities for Indigenous Australians.

5.2 Definitions and statistics

The Indigenous population of Canada is diverse, and is generally divided into three broad categories. The *First Nations* (Premières Nations) people are the main Indigenous group, the original inhabitants of the lands south of the Arctic Circle. The *Inuit* people, from the Arctic area, are distinct. The *Métis*, who are of mixed European and Indigenous ancestry, are another distinct ethnicity. Collectively, the First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples constitute the *Indigenous peoples in Canada* (or Aboriginal Canadians).

The Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness (2012) *defines Indigenous homelessness* as:

a human condition that describes First Nations, Métis and Inuit individuals, families or communities lacking stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means or ability to acquire such housing. Unlike the common colonialist definition of homelessness, Indigenous homelessness is not defined as lacking a structure of habitation; rather, it is more fully described and understood through a composite lens of Indigenous worldviews. These include: individuals, families and communities isolated from their relationships to land, water, place, family, kin, each other, animals, cultures, languages and identities. Importantly, Indigenous people experiencing these kinds of homelessness cannot culturally, spiritually, emotionally or physically reconnect with their Indigeneity or lost relationships (ASCHH 2012).

This definition is now widely referenced by government and Indigenous peoples alike. Jesse Thistle, at the COH, University of York, examines the definition in his research paper *Definition of Indigenous homelessness in Canada* (2017). Part of this work is Thistle's proposed '12 dimensions of Indigenous homelessness as articulated by Indigenous peoples across Canada'. The dimensions he identifies are: historic displacement, contemporary geographic separation, spiritual disconnection, mental disruption and imbalance, cultural disintegration and loss, overcrowding, relocation and mobility, going home, nowhere to go, escaping or evading harm, emergency crisis, and climatic refugee.

As in Australia, there is an evident over-representation of Indigenous peoples in Canadian homelessness. Also reflective of Australia is the influence of alcohol and/or other drugs on the homelessness status of Indigenous peoples, which is visible from walking the streets. Current figures provided by the Aboriginal Housing Management Association (AHMA) identify that around 7 per cent of Indigenous people in urban centres are homeless; more than 87 per cent of all Indigenous people are living off-reserve; and Indigenous children account for over half of all youth in foster care across Canada (AHMA c.2018).

Although Indigenous peoples are clearly over-represented in Canadian homelessness, it would be interesting to develop an understanding of how much more extreme those figures might be if not for the existence of services such as those provided by the Aboriginal Friendship Centres and First Nations housing providers.

5.3 Observations and significant learnings

5.3.1 Aboriginal Housing Management Association

AHMA is a member-based, not-for-profit society that partners with the British Columbia government to provide safe and secure housing for Indigenous people in the province (see Photo 9). In our meeting with the AHMA, a story was communicated to the study group that encapsulates one of the most significant learnings for Australia. The story revolves around an Indigenous person rolling a rock around in his hand, which he had taken out of his pocket whilst speaking with his non-Indigenous friend. The rock is important to the man and he carries it everywhere. Curious, his friend asks to see the rock, thinking it must be something special. The rock is handed over and upon review, the friend throws the rock away, stating it is nothing special. The Indigenous person is saddened but says nothing. He promises to himself, though, that his rock will not be shared again.

The importance of this story assisted in establishing the conversations that followed. It goes to the heart of trust and respect. It also highlights that one should never assume to know what's best for another. In this vein, Australia and Canada's historical approaches to Indigenous housing and homelessness are similar. The moral of the story, said the representatives at AHMA, is that Indigenous people need to stop having things done *to* them and need to become part of the solution if there is to be any hope of success. Respect and understanding of culture, and establishing a common purpose through true collaboration, is the pathway forward. Encouragingly, they could provide many examples of locally based success stories.

The organisation displayed a refreshing honesty (reflective of the First Nations housing sector more generally), demonstrated by a collaborative focus and an agreed need to have a 'clean' Aboriginal not-for-profit housing and homelessness sector—a clear line in the sand that had been drawn to ensure better service delivery (and which saw the 'dodgy' operators of the past cleaned out many years ago).

Another point identified in the discussions was the great need for true bipartisan support from the major political parties, and an understanding that resources and funding must be allocated based on need, not per capita. This is considered a key building block to achieving inroads into this challenging space—and is as applicable in Australia as it is in Canada.

Photo 9: ABHA office Vancouver



5.3.2 Lu'ma Native Housing Society

There is a notable and encouraging trend in Canada for Aboriginal-led and/or -owned enterprises to be actively engaged in, and sought out for contributions to, localised solutions to Indigenous housing issues. This translates to a clear influence of culture in the provision of housing and accommodation services; however, it also appears to lead to recognition within the sector that reliance on government funding streams alone limit the ability of organisations to innovate and grow.

The Lu'ma Native Housing Society (see Photo 10) provides a prime example of how First Nations housing associations have evolved to become key players in the Indigenous housing sphere. Created in 1980 to provide affordable housing to Aboriginal families and individuals on low incomes, Lu'ma has progressed from facilitating housing provision to funding and creating their own buildings and services.

Though our primary focus is to build, own and operate affordable housing, we have evolved as a Society and now provide a broad range of services that improve social determinants of health such as: Lu'ma Medical Centre; the Aboriginal Patients' Lodge; Community Voice Mail; the Aboriginal Children's Village; and Aboriginal Youth Mentorship & Housing Program. (Lu'ma Native Housing Society 2019)

The highly commended Aboriginal Patients' Lodge (see Photo 11) provides Indigenous people from across the province with comfortable apartment accommodation while they are undertaking medical treatment, recovering from illness or surgery, or visiting Vancouver for appointments. The Lu'ma Medical Centre acknowledges and provides

traditional medicine and healing for Indigenous people, in addition to modern medical treatment (see Photo 12). Lu'ma also provides accommodation for people fleeing family violence.

Photo 10: Lu'ma Native Housing Society



Photo 11: Lu'ma Aboriginal Patients' Lodge



Lu'ma Aboriginal Children's Village

One of the most impressive programs in Lu'ma's portfolio is the Aboriginal Children's Village, which operates under the tenet of Jordan's Principle—that is, to ensure First Nations children can access the services and supports they need, when they need them.¹²

Indigenous foster youths live at the mixed-use complex (see Photo 13) with their foster carers. Uniquely, the youth is identified as the 'head tenant'—thus, if there is a relationship breakdown within the family unit, it is the carers who are moved, not the

¹² Jordan was a child of First Nation descent who spent his whole life in hospital, despite having been approved to live at home with proper care, whilst a dispute occurred between the various tiers of government as to which entity had responsibility for that care. Following his death, in hospital, at the age of five, a 'child first' philosophy emerged under the banner of Jordan's Principle.

youth. This provides continuity and stability for the youth in terms of accommodation, schooling, neighbourhood, and medical care (via the linked medical centre).

The program aims to help youths transition from foster care to independent living, and offers an integrated approach, including: education and skills training, tenancy coaching, employment support, relationship building, cultural activities, family dinners, and health and legal aid services (Lu'ma Native Housing Society 2019).

This service provides accommodation for 80–100 foster children, across Lu'ma's various assets, and is realising tangible benefits.

Lu'ma continues to expand its funding streams to include more non-government sources. The Patients' Lodge, for example, relies on 26 funding partners. In addition, they foster a number of key partnerships, which allow them to maintain autonomy in terms of decision-making (outside of government funding agreements). Such a pathway gives control back to the community, and is an approach that could easily be more formally adopted in Australia. Lu'ma representatives also mentioned the possibility of developing a 'co-op' housing arrangement among Aboriginal enterprises, such that their combined purchasing power could see their limited dollars stretched further, in order to achieve even better outcomes.

Photo 12: Lu'ma Medical Centre



5.3.3 Aboriginal Friendship Centres

Friendship Centres have been in place across Canada since the early 1950s and the movement has developed and evolved over the decades. The centres are non-profit community organisations that provide a range programs and services to urban Indigenous peoples, including housing, youth programs, health and employment services, and cultural activities.

Our visit to the Vancouver Friendship Centre provided further insights into how Aboriginal entities are sourcing finance outside of government funding. A conspicuous

example is the social enterprise arts centre and catering company operating within the footprint of the facility. Whilst the centre itself has historically been government funded, that recurrent funding is now supported by enterprises such as these, giving the operating entity a degree of flexibility in their approach.

Within the centre, and entwined in the daily operations of the facility, are services such as the Urban Aboriginal Navigation Team, ACCESS (Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services Society), seniors' rooms, youth support services, and cultural event coordination. Scopes of work for future accommodation developments are populated on the community boards, inviting input into the design process—a reflection of the centre's focus on respecting culture and encouraging community control.

A move from living on-reserve to living in a city often appears to close the door to the possibility of return. Friendship Centres arose as a place where Indigenous people could continue to nourish their culture and tribal identities. The health and wellbeing outcomes that flow from the centres are likely immeasurable, and the services offered provide important pathways to help Indigenous people establish themselves in the city.

5.3.4 First Nations social housing enterprises

A key area into which many Indigenous organisations are expanding is the provision of seniors' villages. Again, the influence of culture and identity in such facilities contributes to their success, while also helping to overcome the rise of 'nimby' attitudes within neighbourhoods.

Madawan Lodge, run by the Gignul Non-Profit Housing Corporation, provides an example of a well-operating seniors' village. The idea for the facility grew from two objectives identified by the Gignul Board. First, they wanted to respond to the Ottawa homelessness crisis by creating affordable shelter; and second, they wanted to establish affordable accommodation for the growing population of Aboriginal seniors. The Lodge met both criteria. Seniors were transitioned from Gignul RGI units to the Lodge, freeing up those units for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Following the success of Madawan Lodge, similar projects have been funded by the province, creating a larger pool of appropriate housing for Indigenous people.

Another social enterprise at the forefront of Indigenous housing provision is Skwachàys Lodge in Vancouver, described as 'the country's first urban aboriginal boutique hotel' (Griffin 2014). The Lodge is owned and operated by the Vancouver Native Housing Society and provides 24 social housing residences for Indigenous artists, for a period of up to three years. The remainder of the lodge forms an 18-room boutique hotel, which funds the social housing element.

The hotel rooms are decorated with Indigenous art and a gallery on the ground floor sells artworks produced by the residents. The basement provides a work area for the in-house artists to ply their trade. This innovative approach provides a home for Indigenous artists who would otherwise be homeless, whilst supporting their transition into sustainable and profitable work.

Since opening in 2014, the hotel has maintained an occupancy rate over 90 per cent and has been listed as a must-stay location for visitors to Vancouver by *Time* magazine. This initiative demonstrates, once more, how effective, locally based strategies can allow organisations to build bridges from complete reliance on government funding to sustainable, recurrent funding from other sources.

5.4 Applications for Australia

The Canadian tax system gives provinces a significantly larger say in determining tax-dollars spend, compared with the states and territories in Australia. As such, the influence of national government policy versus provincial and even municipal funding streams to Indigenous housing and homelessness programs provides a point of difference.

Canada experienced a dark social period akin to Australia's Stolen Generations, the Residential Schools era. Over a century, national government policy saw some 150,000 First Nations, Inuit and Métis children removed from their families and sent to residential schools. This social policy has had an understandably detrimental impact on the Indigenous community. This is evident in the over-representation of Indigenous homelessness, as well as the higher rates of violence and murder faced by Indigenous women. One of the key sub-themes of the current National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls is the need to improve access to safe housing along the entire housing spectrum, from emergency shelters to secure permanent housing. Australia's Indigenous populations experience a similarly disproportionate level of disadvantage. Canada's history should act as a caution to Australia that to simply maintain the status quo will only result in further adverse impacts on Indigenous people. In Canada, governments have begun to recognise and acknowledge the mistakes of the past and are working to remedy them using lessons learned.

One of the most effective strategies we observed on the Study Tour was the Housing First approach, which has been widely implemented throughout Canada as a pathway to assist in improving social outcomes, particularly for Indigenous people. So far, Australia has not embraced the Housing First model—to continue to do so would be a mistake.

The extent of social disadvantage for Indigenous Australians is well documented. Against this backdrop, we currently see reductions in recurrent government funding sources, as well as discord around which tier of government is ultimately responsible for various parts of the problem. True bipartisan support and generational timeline commitment, across all tiers of government, is required. Amid this broader disadvantage, Indigenous homelessness and overcrowding is fundamental, with flow-on affects to health and wellbeing. Governments need to prioritise housing and homelessness and provide solutions that are needs-based, rather than per capita.

Existing and emerging Aboriginal enterprises in Australia would do well to take heed of what is occurring in Canada. First Nations housing providers have thrived by identifying localised solutions and aligning these with social enterprise funding sources built in to their operating environment. The number of successful programs we encountered, each with a strong and visible presence of Indigenous employees, was impressive and heartening. While ongoing, secure government funding becomes harder to secure, not-for-profit organisations who embrace enterprise wrest a degree of control over their own destinies, outside of prescribed government funding arrangements and grants.

Considering the overwhelming success of the First Nations enterprises we visited, Australian governments should be strongly supporting moves towards community control and ownership of Aboriginal housing programs—and encouraging their development by innovative means whenever possible. Social enterprises may also lead to more co-funded arrangements, creating sustainability through expansion into other enterprises, and delivering true social-outcome returns.

In closing: Canada provided us with a great insight into what the future could be like for Australia, for all those who are involved in the Indigenous housing and homelessness space. Whilst the country's system is not perfect, the many positive plans that are in

motion suggest they are on a good path. The willingness of all those we met and spoke with to share their experiences was incredibly valuable and much appreciated. The tour has paved the way for future international collaboration.

6 Key implications

Michael Fotheringham

6.1 Lessons from Canada's housing system

The varied history of the Canadian housing system has seen a range of failures and successes, from which the government has learned and moved forward with increasingly progressive strategies. Those experiences offer important lessons for Australia.

Strengths

- Pre-1992 federal policy settings that built significant affordable housing stock nationally.
- Community health, housing and community service integration.
- The innovative and entrepreneurial approach by many organisations delivering frontline services.
- Tenacious First Nations community organisations delivering wholistic life outcomes.
- Development of a national housing strategy with clear outcomes, targets and a flexible approach.

Cautions

- Post-1992 complicated and uncertain federal, provincial, municipal and government business enterprise GBE funding arrangements.
- Tenuous connection between the homelessness and social housing systems.
- Minimal early-intervention and prevention programs due to dominance of Housing First.
- Targeting of funding to chronicity—meaning people need to be 'really sick' to meet program requirements (with scant focus on early intervention or prevention).
- 'Warehousing homelessness'—operation of enormous shelters (2,000+ beds) where people often stay for extraordinarily long periods.
- Lack of evidence-based decision-making in policy and systems thinking.
- No federal definition of homelessness or regulated monitoring of prevalence.
- Lack of significant new funding in the NHS.
- Absence of a confirmed funding commitments within the NHS.
- The capacity for provinces to levy sales taxes alters their role in the nation's government systems.

6.2 Lessons to date from the National Housing Strategy

Canada's NHS is in its early days—investment has yet to significantly increase over pre-NHS levels (this will largely occur after 2022). Instead, what has been created is a national conversation, engaging the federal, provincial and territorial governments

(including through bilateral agreements with the federal government), municipal governments and service sectors.

Municipal governments are a largely missing ingredient in Australian housing policy discussions, but are a major provider of social housing in Canada. More prominent and observable than an inter-governmental agreement, the NHS generates authentic accountability—from all levels of government.

In understanding the Canadian NHS from an Australian perspective, two important contextual differences are worth noting:

- the role of CMHC in generating revenue
- the ability of provinces to levy sales taxes.

Given these differences, there are a number of useful learnings for Australia generated by the early implementation of Canada's NHS:

- the important role of advocacy in generating national (not just federal) dialogue
- the need for federal government to bring vision and funding
- the need for provinces and territory governments to bring engagement and funding
- the need for municipal government to bring engagement and service provision
- the importance of long-term funding commitments, in order to develop capacity, supply and service innovation
- the importance of long-term vision in order to develop accountability and ensure wider engagement
- the importance of a strategy that takes a rights-based approach, where access to safe and affordable housing is considered a universal right
- the need for legislation that requires federal government to maintain a national housing strategy and report to parliament on targets and outcomes.
- the benefits of establishing a federal housing advocate that can make recommendations to governments and GBEs
- the enormous value of a truly national approach (with federal and provincial governments working together), both for gaining traction and engaging key partners.

6.3 Applications for Australia

Successful programs and strategies that could be replicated and trialled in Australia include:

- innovative tenant allocation—as seen in the Lu'ma Aboriginal Children's Village
- community health integration (addressing housing, food security, living skills, wellbeing and social connection needs)—as seen in housing programs by The Alex and Lu'ma Native Housing Society
- focus on the social determinants of health—as seen in the integrated services offered by Lu'ma Native Housing Society and The Alex
- Indigenous social enterprise—as seen at Skwachàys Lodge (Indigenous housing, gallery and hotel) and the arts centre and catering company at the Vancouver Friendship Centre

- Indigenous organisations supporting Indigenous people—as seen in Canada’s Friendship Centres, which deliver wholistic services and incubate social enterprises
- temporary modular housing—as developed by BC Housing in Vancouver.

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Appendix 1: Study tour itinerary

The AHURI Study Tour to Canada ran from 8–22 September 2018.

Vancouver, British Columbia

Saturday 8 September 2018

- Assembly in Brisbane, Australia

Sunday 9 September 2018

- Transit from Brisbane Australia to Vancouver, British Columbia

Monday 10 September 2018

- **Planning seminar** 10.00am–2.00pm
Sonata meeting room, Vancouver Westin Grand Hotel
Allocation of responsibilities for note-taking according to themes—led by Michael Fotheringham
- **Orientation workshop** 2.30pm–6.00pm
Sonata meeting room, Vancouver Westin Grand Hotel
Overview of Canadian housing and homelessness—led by Steve Pomeroy, Focus Consulting
- **Working dinner** 6.30pm–
Dinner speaker Steve Pomeroy, Focus Consulting

Tuesday 11 Sept 2018

- **BC Housing** 10:00am–1.30pm
4555 Kingsway, Burnaby, British Columbia
Led by:
 - Karen Hemmingson, Chief Research Officer
 - John Bell, Chief Advisor, Strategic Planning Governance and Sustainability
 - Bruk Melles, Director, Supportive Housing and Programs
- **BC Non-Profit Housing Association / Co-operative Housing Federation of BC** 2:30pm–5.00pm
1651 Commercial Drive, Vancouver, BC
Led by
 - Jill Atkey, CEO, BC Non-Profit Housing Association
 - Thom Armstrong, Executive Director, Co-Operative Housing Federation of BC

Wednesday 12 September 2018

Day coordinated with Margaret Pfoh (CEO) and David Silva (Director) Aboriginal Housing Management Association

→ **Aboriginal Housing Management Association** 9:00am–2.30pm
Led by

- David Silva, Director Asset Strategies, AMHA
- Laurie Brownrigg, Media and Communications specialist
- Trevor Broadhead, Chief Operating Officer, VNHS

Program:

9.00am	Tour group collected from hotel
9.30–10.30am	Lu'ma Boardroom—Discussion on Australian housing and AHMA Marcel Swain, CEO, Lu'ma Native Housing Society
10.30am–11.30am	Lu'ma Tour—Introduction and tour of Children's Village and Medical Clinic Marcel Swain, CEO, Lu'ma Native Housing Society
11.30am–12.00pm	Shuttle to Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre
12.00pm–1.00pm	Tour of Vancouver Friendship Centre
1.00pm–1.30pm	Shuttle to Vancouver Native Housing Society
1.30pm–2.30pm	Tour of Skwachàys Lodge
2.30pm	Shuttle to hotel

Thursday 13 September 2018

Day coordinated with Lance Jakubec, CMHC

→ **Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation** 9:00am–12:00pm
Led by

- Lance Jakubec, Affordable Housing Specialist, CMHC
- Rob Jaswal, Affordable Housing Consultant, CMHC

Program:

9.00am	Tour group collected from hotel
9.00am–9.10am	Introductory briefing
9:10–12:00pm	Walking tour
	Temporary Modular Apartments 220 Terminal Avenue
	Mau Dan Gardens Co-operative 350 Pender Street
	Imouto 502 Alexander Street
	Former remand centre 250 Powell Street

Sequel 138

138 East Hastings Street

Pennsylvania Hotel

412 Carrall Street

Congregation of unsheltered homeless

East downtown Vancouver

Olivia Skye

41 East Hastings Street

60 West Cordova

60 West Cordova Street

Woodwards

101 West Hastings Street

12.00pm

Return to hotel

Thursday 13 September 2018

→ Transit Vancouver to Calgary

Calgary, Alberta**Friday 14 September 2018**

Day coordinated with Tim Richter, President and CEO CAEH

→ **The Alex Pathways to Housing** 9.30am–12pm
 Starting at The Alex Community Food Centre (CFC), 17 Ave SE, Calgary
 Led by

- Loretta Dobbelsteyn, CEO, The Alex
- Steve Gaspar, Associate Director of Housing First Programs, The Alex
- Merrill Cooper, Director of Research and Evaluation, The Alex

Program

9.30–10.30am The Alex Community Food Centre

10.30–11.00am The Alex Permanent Supportive Housing

11.00–12pm The Alex Health Centre

→ **Community Housing Affordability Collective** 12.30pm–2.30pm
 Led by

- Martina Jileckova, CEO, Horizon Housing Society
- Matt Vermunt, Manager Acquisitions and Developments, HomeSpace

→ **Calgary Homeless Foundation** 3.00pm–4.00pm
 Rocky Mountain Plaza, 615 Macleod Trail SE, Calgary
 Led by

- Steven Richardson, System Planner, CHF

- Shane Rempel, System Planner, CHF
- Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness 4.00pm–5.00pm
Led by
 - Tim Richter, President and CEO, CAE

Saturday 15 September

- Transit Calgary to Ottawa

Ottawa, Ontario and Gatineau, Quebec

Sunday 16 September

- Rest day

Monday 17 September 2018

- **Employment and Social Development Canada (Emploi et Développement Social Canada)**
12.00pm–2.00pm
140 Promenade du Portage, Gatineau, Quebec
Led by
 - Natasha Pateman, Executive Director, Community Development and Homelessness Partnering Directorate, ESDC
- **Office of the Federal Minister for Families, Children and Social Development (Minister for Housing) 4.00pm–5.30pm**
140 Promenade du Portage, Gatineau, Quebec
Led by
 - Dylan Marando, Director of Policy, Minister Duclos
 - The Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos, PC MP FRSC, Minister for Families, Children and Social Development
- Working dinner 7pm–
Dinner speaker Professor Tim Aubrey, University of Ottawa

Tuesday 18 September 2018

Day coordinated with Marc Maracle, Executive Director Gignul Non-Profit Housing Corporation

- **Canadian Housing and Renewal Association—Indigenous Caucus and Gignul Non-Profit Housing Corporation**
MacLaren Street, Ottawa
Led by
 - SM Leduc, Manager of Policy and Research, CHRA
 - Marc Maracle, Executive Director, GNPHC

Program

10–12.30pm	Discussion of Indigenous housing issues in Canada and Australia
12.30–1.30pm	Mobile tour of Gignul sites throughout Ottawa
1.30–2.30pm	Madawan Management and Development Inc. Madawan Lodge, Cummings Ave, Ottawa

Wednesday 19 September 2018

Day coordinated with Jane Tsai, CMHC

- **Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation** 9.00am–1.00pm
Montreal Road, Ottawa
Led by
 - Ben Williams, Director, Housing Indicators and Analytics, CMHC
 - Bert Pereboom, Manager, Policy and Research, Housing Finance, CMHC
 - Erik Blache, Senior Manager, Demonstrations and Excellence, Housing Needs, CMHC
 - Sugan Mannavarajan, Senior Specialist, Client Relations, Assisted Housing, CMHC
 - Jane Tsai, Specialist, Housing Needs Policy, CMHC
 - Julia Markovich, Senior Specialist, Housing Needs Research, CMHC
- **The Oaks by Shepherds of Good Hope** 1.30pm–3.30pm
Led by
 - Neil Leslie, Vice President, Shepherds of Good Hope Foundation
 - Ray MacQuatt, Program Manager, The Oaks
- Transit Ottawa to Toronto

Toronto

Thursday 20 September 2018

- Walking tour of Regent Park major precinct revitalisation project
Led by
 - Michael Fotheringham
- Toronto Community Housing
Oak Street, Toronto, Ontario
Led by
 - Hugh Lawson, Director Strategic Planning and Stakeholder Relations, TCH

Friday 21 September 2018

- **Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (The Homelessness Hub)** 9am–1:00pm
York University, Keele Street, Toronto
Led by

- Allyson Marsolais, Chief Operating Officer, COH

- **Wrap-up seminar**
Cambridge Suites, Toronto
Planning of reporting and next steps—led by Michael Fotheringham

- **Walking tour of Toronto urban renewal precincts**
Led by

- Michael Fotheringham

Program

Alexandra Park (TCH)

Downtown Toronto

Atkinson Co-op Housing (TCH)

71 Augusta Square

The Grange Hotel (transitional housing)

165 Grange Avenue

Saturday 22 September 2018

- Transit Toronto to Vancouver
- Return to Australia

Appendix 2: Key features of Canadian social housing programs

Canadian Social Housing 1949-1996: Key Features of Major Programs							
Program: (date = when project started)	Public Housing 1949-1963	Public Housing 1964-1978	Non-profit & Co-op 1974-1978	Non-profit & Co-op 1979-1985	Federal Co-op 1986-1992	Federal- Provincial 1986-1993	Provincial Unilateral 1987 onwards
Also known as	Federal- Provincial public housing	Provincial housing corporation	s.15 & 15.1 (later s.26 & 27) co-op s.34.18 (later s.61)	s.56.1 (later s.95) (includes "MNP" munic.non-profit)	ILM (Index Linked Mortgage)	"F/P"	Homes Now (Ont), Homes BC, AccèsLogis (Que)
Owner	CMHC+PHC §	PHC §	Non-profit, Co-op, or Municipal (some provincial in Que, Sask, Yukon)		Co-op	Non-profit, Co-op, or Municipal (some F/P provincial in some cases)	
Financing (100% of original project cost exc. as noted)	75% CMHC loan (25% provincial) Fixed rate. 50-60-year am.	90% CMHC loan, (10% provincial), Fixed rate. 50-60-year am.	10% CMHC grant. 90% CMHC loan. Fixed rate. 50-year am.	Private mortg., CMHC guarantee. 35-year am.	Private mortg., CMHC guarantee. 35-year am. Special formula.	Private mortg., CMHC guarantee. 35-year am.	Varied by province (Private mortgage in Ont. 1987-95, with CMHC guarantee)
Rationale for Changed Funding Model	First funding recipe. Federal gov't required strong provincial cost-sharing	Federal priority. Capital costs were biggest challenge. Fed. fiscal capacity.	Not gov't owned. Projects then could break even at market rent, after 10% grant	Reduce federal capital spending. High interest rates then were biggest challenge	Back-loaded (inflation-based) amortization intended to enhance viability	High capital costs, high percent RGI → Break-even well above market rent → Unified subsidies to make project viable (may vary from this in AccèsLogis)	
Percent RGI	Varied originally. 100% by 1968.	100%	Usually 25%	Usually 25-40% (40-60% if munic)	Usually 40%	Varied by project; norms were 80% in Ont., 100% in BC, 50% in Que.	
Who paid operating subsidy ‡	75% federal, 25% provincial §	50% federal, 50% provincial §	Mostly RGI subsidy only	Federal subsidy equivalent to 2% mortgage rate + related provincial subsidy §	Federal subsidy tied to special mortgage formula	60% fed. on Core Need units (=most RGI). Rest of sub- sidy provincial. §	100% provincial §
Funding of RGI subsidy	RGI is part of overall operating subsidy for difference between rents & approved costs		Stacked rent supplement, usually cost- shared 50/50 federal-provincial	Some RGI within 56.1 program; Some stacked rent supp, usually 50/50 F-P	Federal ILM rent supplement	RGI is part of operating subsidy for difference between rents & approved costs	Varied by province (Same as F/P in Ontario 1987-95)
Capital Repairs	No reserve funds. Major repairs in operating budget or special funding.		Capital reserve funds, with annual contributions (rarely adequate for long term).				
<p>“s” = section of National Housing Act. CMHC = Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. “am.” = amortization period. “PHC” = provincial housing corporation. “munic.” = municipal. Private mortgage refers to lending institution (bank, insurance co., trust co., etc.). Urban Native program not shown. Some variations exist which are not included in this table.</p> <p>§ = Provincial subsidy in Ontario became a municipal responsibility in 1998; provincial housing stock in Ontario became owned by municipal housing corporations in 2000.</p> <p>‡ Original cost-share is shown. Federal subsidy share is declining in many cases in recent years under the devolution agreements (Social Housing Agreements).</p>							

Appendix 3: Summary of social and affordable housing administration in British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario

Extract from *Canada's Social and Affordable Housing Landscape: A Province-to-Province Overview*, Housing Services Corporation, April 2014.¹³

British Columbia

British Columbia Housing Management Commission (BC Housing) was established in 1967 and has a mandate to fulfil the government's commitment to the development, management and administration of subsidised housing.

BC Housing is a crown corporation and reports to the Minister Responsible for Housing through a Board of Commissioners, appointed by the provincial government to oversee policy implementation and direction and, in cooperation with senior management, to set strategic direction.

There are around 700–800 housing providers in British Columbia, mostly non-profit societies and housing co-operatives, which manage nearly 60,000 social and affordable housing dwellings. BC Housing only manages around 7,000 social (public) housing dwellings.

BC Housing also has responsibilities under the *Homeowner Protection Act* and plays an important role for buyers of new homes by licensing residential builders, administering owner builder authorisations, overseeing the third-party home warranty insurance system and carrying out research and education to improve the quality of construction of new homes.

The Provincial Rental Housing Corporation (PRHC) holds property for social and other low-cost housing for the Province. Incorporated in 1961 (under the *Business Corporations Act*), PRHC buys, holds and disposes of provincially owned social housing properties and leases residential properties to non-profit societies and co-ops. Members of BC Housing's senior management team serve as PRHC's president and directors and the sole shareholder is the Minister of Housing in BC. PRHC is administered by BC Housing and does not directly employ any staff.

BC Housing receives the majority of its revenue from the provincial government (65%) with a smaller proportion from the federal government (27%) and the balance from tenant revenue (4%) and some other sources (4%).

Alberta

In Alberta, the Department of Housing, located in the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, contributes to the inclusion, wellbeing, and independence of lower-income Albertans through safe, sustainable and affordable housing, and assists urban communities with addressing their unique needs.

The Alberta Social Housing Corporation (ASHC) is an entity of the Crown and operates under the authority of the *Alberta Housing Act*. The ASHC's main mandate is to facilitate the provision of affordable housing options to low-income Albertans and those

¹³ The full report can be download here: https://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/531-Canada-Social-Housing-Landscape_2014.pdf

with special needs through community-based Housing Management Bodies (HMBs), and to administer the seniors' self-contained housing program. The ASHC owns and administers the Crown's portfolio of housing assets and manages provincial debts and agreements associated with those assets.

Reporting in Alberta occurs at the Ministerial level (i.e. includes Municipal Affairs and not just Housing) and it is difficult to identify where revenues come from and expenditures are made for various social and affordable housing programs.

About 26,500 provincially-owned or supported social housing units are overseen by Municipal Affairs. Over 400 organisations, including municipalities, housing management bodies, non-profit and private sector organisations provide housing for Albertans in need.

Ontario

In Ontario, the administration of social housing is complex and diverse. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) is responsible as a 'steward' for social housing and for the governing legislation, the *Housing Services Act 2011*.

In 2001, the province devolved funding and administration to 47 different service managers, mandated by MMAH to fund and administer social housing at the service manager (municipal or regional) level. The Act and regulations provide a social housing funding formula, eligibility criteria for rent geared-to-income housing and rules governing housing providers and service managers. Service managers also administer centralised waiting lists as per the legislation and oversee independent non-profits, co-operatives as well as service-manager owned housing.

Other housing organisations, including private rental market landlords, may also be contracted by the service manager to provide rent geared-to-income housing. MMAH administers the former Rural and Native Housing program by way of agreement with Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services that owns and manages over 1,600 units across Ontario.

Service managers have powers and authorities under the *Housing Services Act* including the administration of centralised waiting lists using local priorities set within their regions or municipalities. This has allowed waiting lists to be further geared to local needs in Ontario, but it has also led to larger variations in how social housing is administered in Canada.

It is estimated that there are around 270,000 social housing dwellings in Ontario managed by the 47 service managers.

Due to the fact that multiple governments and organisations are involved in funding and administering social and affordable housing in Ontario, a comprehensive picture of revenues and expenses is not available.

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